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# TIP TOP WEEKLY

AN  
IDEAL PUBLICATION  
FOR THE AMERICAN YOUTH

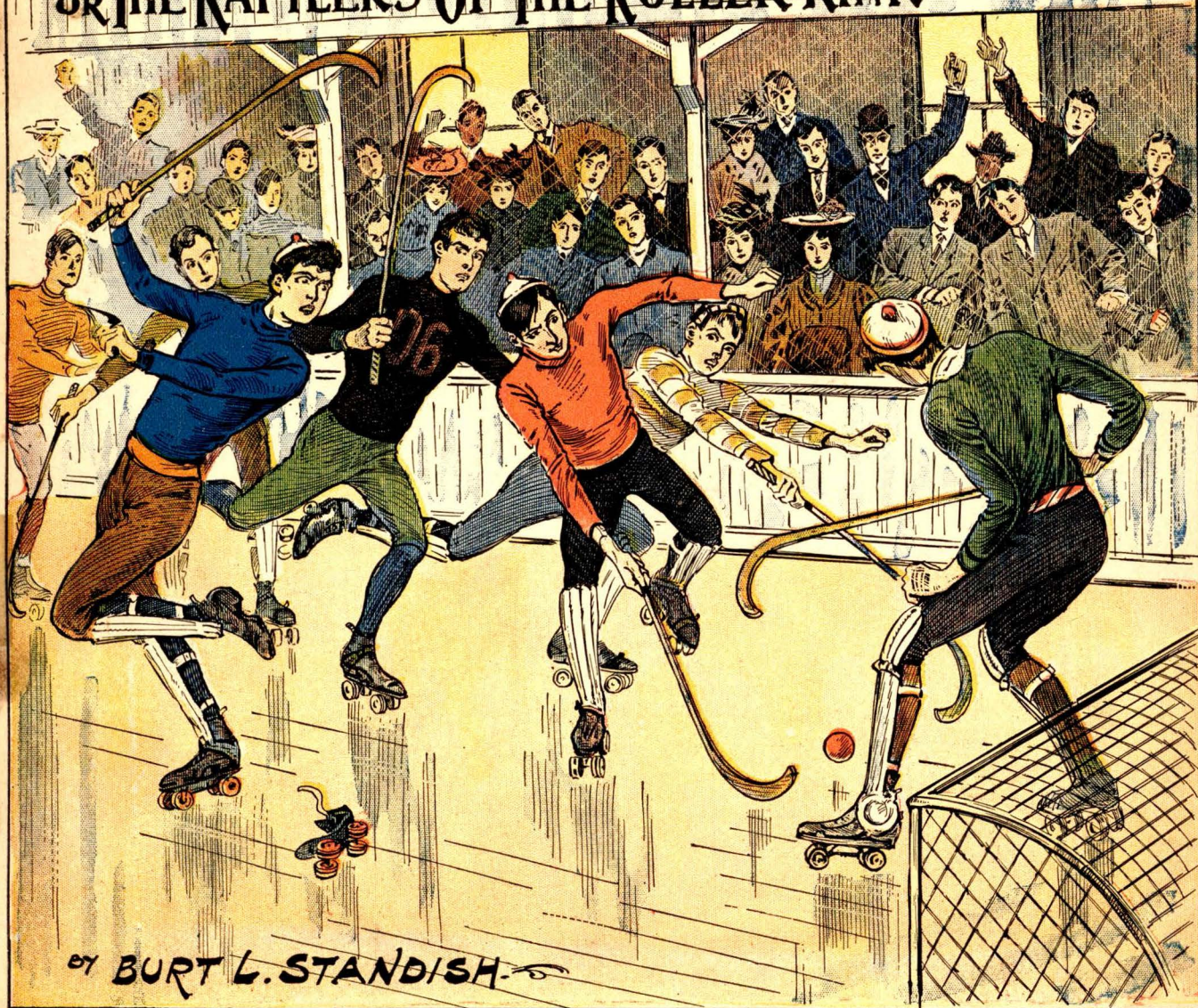
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NEW YORK, JANUARY 20, 1906.

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## DICK MERRIWELL'S POLO TEAM OR THE RATTLERS OF THE ROLLER RINK



Sturtevant saw his opportunity and embraced it before the referee's attention could be called to Dick's misfortune. With a clean sharp stroke he drove the ball into the net.



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# DICK MERRIWELL'S POLO TEAM;

OR,

## The Rattlers of the Roller Rink.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

### CHAPTER I.

#### FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

The Boston boat, *City of Bangor*, lay at her wharf at Bucksport, taking on the last consignment of freight and such belated passengers as came hurrying over the plank.

In midwinter Bucksport, on the Penobscot River, is the northern port for the Eastern Steamship Line. At this season the river above Bucksport is usually impassable on account of ice. This makes it necessary to transport both freight and passengers from Bangor to Bucksport by rail.

Dick Merriwell and his three friends, Buckhart, Gardner, and Tubbs, capped, overcoated, and well prepared for cold weather, stood by the rail of the boat and watched the freight-handlers booming up and down the plank with their trucks.

"Um-yum!" muttered Obediah, holding his hands to his corpulent stomach. "Great pie they have up to

the Robinson House. My gracious! didn't seem to me that I could get enough."

"I didn't think you would get enough," laughed Dick. "I began to fear they didn't have enough in the house."

"Me, too," admitted Obed. "I tell you when a feller's been up in the Maine woods whetting his appetite on the kind of grub one gits there a really and truly pie tastes like heaven."

"Waugh! I have an appetite of my own," put in Buckhart. "Kind of killed it down up at Moosehead doing the cooking for the rest of you lazy chaps, but she rose up on me like a tiger the moment I broke out of the woods."

"Well, we've had a good time, anyhow," said Gardner. "Haven't you enjoyed it, fellows?"

"Have we?" cried Dick. "Ask us! I didn't suppose it could be such sport camping in midwinter in Maine."

"I told you that you'd enjoy it," reminded Earl.

"And you were right. I could have stayed two weeks longer and enjoyed it just as much. The time

actually flew while we were at Piper's camp, on Moosehead."

"Moosehead," said Brad. "That reminds me. I haven't seen them bring your moose's head aboard yet. You had it mounted finely in Bangor. Are you sure it was shipped in time to catch this boat, Dick?"

"I looked out for that personally," nodded Merriwell. "There it comes now in that box. That's all right."

"He! he!" laughed Tubbs. "You certainly had a warm time getting that head. Mortimer Sturtevant and them friends of ours over to Twin Camps mighty near took it away from you and kept it."

"They didn't keep it a great while, you bet your boots!" rumbled Buckhart. "When we went for it, we took it. You hear me gently warble!"

"If we hadn't succeeded then," said Dick, "Sturtevant would have given it up after we saved him and Flutterby from the timber-wolves. I don't fancy he's really such a bad fellow at heart, though I can't stand for that lisping chap, Flutterby."

"I tell you, pard," chipped in the Texan promptly, "I haven't any use for Sturtevant. Being the son of the great Maine Timber King, Augustus Sturtevant, he thinks he's a whole lot superior to ordinary mortal clay. Somehow he reminds me of Chester Arlington!"

Dick shook his head.

"I don't think he's quite such a thoroughbred rascal as Arlington. He seemed grateful and sincere enough after we saved him from the wolves."

"Well, he should have been," asserted Brad. "How could he appear any different? Piper says old Augustus is a scoundrel who's made his money by crushing others that were weaker, and I opine Mortimer is a chip off the same block."

"Of course you may be right," admitted Dick. "Hello! speak of the Old Nick and you're liable to hear his footsteps! Look there, fellows!"

He nodded toward seven young chaps who were hurrying toward the passenger plank. Several of them carried leather cases, which seemed to contain hockey or polo sticks. Among them was the very fellow of whom they had been speaking, Mortimer Sturtevant.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Gardner. "That's him, sure enough! What's he doing? Where's he going?"

"May be bound for Boston," ventured Tubbs.

"Waugh!" snorted Buckhart. "Look at that little runt! By the great horn spoon, it's Flutterby!"

"That's right," said Dick. "And the one on Flutterby's left is Dave Crabtree. Crabtree is carrying a polo or hockey stick. They look like some sort of a team. This is interesting, boys."

Barely had the young fellows of whom they were speaking crossed the plank when the bell of the steamer clanged a warning, which told that she was about to swing out from the pier and drop down-stream.

"Funny thing a hockey or polo team should be leaving Bangor for Boston," said Gardner. "I suppose they're going to Boston."

"Still they may not be," reminded Dick. "They may be bound for some of the ports down-river. We'll find out, if we run across Sturtevant later."

The huge freight plank was pulled in. Two or three persons who had come down to see passengers off left the boat and stood on the wharf. The passenger plank was drawn in, and one of the cables that held the steamer to the pier was cast off. A bell jangled, and the big paddle-wheels began to revolve, swinging the nose of the steamer out toward the channel.

"Hello!" exclaimed Dick. "There's a fellow making a sprint to get here. Seems to be late."

They caught a glimpse of a boyish figure dashing swiftly down the main street, and a moment later it turned a corner and made for the wharf.

"By Jim, he's too late!" said Obediah. "Here we go!"

"He's going to try for it!" burst from Dick. "It'll be a close squeeze."

Merriwell ran back along the rail toward the high spiles at one corner of the wharf. The boy on the wharf made directly for these spiles, sprang upon them, and gave a great leap at the steamer. One hand caught the rail, but it was slippery, and his fingers could not maintain their hold.

Dick Merriwell reached the spot just in time. He had torn off his gloves as he ran, and he clutched the boy's wrist with both hands. A moment later, with a surge, he lifted the fellow, who scrambled over the rail.

"Thank you," said the stranger coolly. "By Jove! you saved me from a very cold ducking."

"Perhaps worse than that," said Dick. "You might have been caught between the steamer and the spiles. It was a reckless thing to do."

"I know it," admitted the other; "but I didn't want to miss this boat. A fellow lied to me—told me the steamer didn't leave until three-fifteen. I was at the drug store up there when I heard the bell."

One of the officers came hastening to the spot and reprimanded the reckless boy rather harshly.

"That'll just about do for you, sir!" exclaimed the boy warmly. "I took my chances. If I'd been drowned, the Eastern Steamship Company could not have been held responsible."

"You'll learn better when you get older," said the officer. "We ought to back up and put you off."

"I wouldn't do that if I were in your place. My name is Winchester. You may have heard of my father. He owns some stock in this line."

"Oh, Winchester?" muttered the man, somewhat abashed. "I beg your pardon, sir. It was natural that I should be alarmed over your narrow escape. No offense intended, sir."

Young Winchester smiled a bit sarcastically as the humbled officer turned away.

"Now isn't that like them!" he said. "I couldn't help throwing it at him that my father was a stockholder. Caddish of me, I suppose. Still, I like to give

these underlings a call when they get too lofty. Had it been the captain he would have known me."

By this time the steamer was well out from the wharf, and they decided to go into the saloon. On entering, they came face to face with Mortimer Sturtevant and several of his companions.

Sturtevant gave a start of surprise as his eyes fell on Winchester.

"Why, hello, Bert!" he exclaimed. "You got aboard all right, I see."

"No thanks to you!" cried Winchester hotly. "You lied to me, Sturtevant!"

## CHAPTER II.

### TROUBLE IN THE POLO LEAGUE.

Sturtevant flushed.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"If you didn't get it, I'll repeat," said Winchester. "You lied to me!"

"I ought to drive those words down your throat!" snapped Sturtevant.

"That'th wight, Mortimer, deah boy," lisped Oscar Flutterby. "You ought to give him a weal hard thmack."

"You don't often stand being called a liar by anybody," put in Dave Crabtree, glaring at Winchester. "What does he mean?"

"Why, I told him the boat left at three-fifteen. It seems that I was mistaken. Another person told me so, and I supposed it was right."

"But I notice you got here in time, just the same," reminded Winchester.

"Didn't have anything else to do. Do you suppose I wanted to loaf around that dull old country village? I'd rather be aboard the steamer. Look here, Winchester, why should I care whether you caught the boat or not?"

"You know the kind of a scrape I'm in, Sturtevant. I explained it to Holt, captain of the Bangor team, and after that I told you what had happened to my team. If I couldn't get back to Rockland in time, I'd have trouble getting any sort of a team together for that game to-morrow night."

"Well, that would be nice for us, wouldn't it?" sneered Sturtevant. "What are we going down there for? We want to play a game of some sort. We know we can trim you, no matter how good a team you put against us."

"Oh, you're very confident," came from Winchester; "you're very confident now. Surely Holt didn't seem so confident when he strengthened his team with you and Crabtree. There's a lot of funny business going on, and I told Holt so. Somebody monkeyed with my players. I'll find out the truth some day, and when I do the public shall know it."

"Oh, come off that prancing high horse," grinned Dave Crabtree. "We know what's the matter with you and your team. You were frightened. You dis-

banded your team in order not to play Bangor the critical game that would decide the championship. That's what's the matter."

"Now, I think I'd be justified in using the same language to you that I used to Sturtevant a few moments ago."

"He theemth to be looking for trouble," piped Flutterby. "Thay, Mortimer, deah boy, have you notithed hith friendth? Theeemth to me we've theen them before."

"I opine you have!" growled Buckhart. "It's our misfortune."

"Why, so we have!" cried Sturtevant. "Merriwell, is it you? Didn't know you were on this boat. Bound for Boston, eh?"

"Yes, we started for Boston," nodded Dick quietly. "Where are you bound?"

"Rockland. Crabtree and I are going down to play against Rockland in the deciding game of the Penobscot Amateur Polo League."

"That's right," said Bert Winchester. "Bangor has strengthened her team with these two fellows, yet neither of them actually belongs in that city."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mortimer, shrugging his shoulders. "My old man has some interests in Bangor."

"But he votes in Boston," reminded the Rockland boy quickly. "How can Crabtree play on the Bangor team?"

"Talk with Holt about that," advised Dave Crabtree. "He says there are no rules by which any straight amateur under nineteen years of age can be barred from the teams of the league. Of course, professionals are barred, and any fellow who takes pay is a professional."

"It's against the spirit in which the league was organized," said Winchester. "It's an oversight that the rules were made so loose, but no one supposed that any team would take on outsiders. My players have been mostly Rockland High-School boys."

"They seem to be a lot of quitters," sneered Sturtevant. "Do you really think they'll go back on you?"

As he said this he winked at Crabtree, and both his words and manner were most insolent. Plainly he implied that Winchester was the "quitter," and was not inclined to play because he feared Bangor would win the deciding game.

"Don't worry!" cried the Rockland lad warmly. "I'll have some sort of a team, you may depend on that!"

"I'm glad to hear it," smiled Sturtevant. "Come, boys, let's go to the stateroom. See you later, Merriwell. So long!"

Dick nodded, while Buckhart muttered:

"Mebbe you won't see us if we see you first!"

As Sturtevant and his friends walked away, Merriwell turned to Winchester.

"Tell me about this business," he said. "I don't like to pry into your affairs, but I'm interested."

"Let's sit down here," invited Bert, motioning toward some chairs. "I'll tell you all about it."

They sat down, and Winchester explained.

"It's this way: Bangor, Belfast, and Rockland organized what is called the Penobscot Amateur Roller Polo League. The organization was made in a hurry, and it is evident now that the rules and by-laws are flimsy affairs. The agreement was that each place should present a straight amateur team of players, all under nineteen years of age. You notice that I say each place was to 'present' such a team. The real meaning was that the teams should be made up of players from the towns which they represented. Well, thus far no game has been played in which the spirit of this agreement was broken. We've played twelve games, which were to constitute the schedule unless there should be ties. In case of ties, a further arrangement was to be made to play off the deciding games. The teams stand like this."

With a pencil he hastily scribbled the standing of the three teams on a scrap of paper and handed it to Dick.

It was as follows:

	WON.	LOST.
Bangor .....	3	1
Rockland .....	3	1
Belfast .....	0	4

"You see," Winchester went on, "Bangor and Rockland are tie. We've arranged to play off this time in Rockland to-morrow night. Bangor wanted the game played in Bangor, but we tossed a coin, and Rockland won."

"Well, now comes the queer part of this business. My team has been made up of the only eligible players in Rockland who are capable of meeting Bangor on an even footing. After the arrangement was made for the final game and the date set, my whole team, with the exception of my substitute player, revolted, and turned me down."

"What made them do that?" asked Dick.

"I wish somebody would tell me. It's mighty queer. Why, they are fellows I know and meet most every day. They attend the Rockland High School. I am in Hebron Academy. I'll tell you the reason they gave for their action. They said a Rockland High boy should be captain and manager of the team. I organized the team, and I've taken most of the risk in securing Elmwood Rink, and standing behind all expenses. We've made a little money, and this I agreed to donate to the Rockland High-School Athletic Association. When the fellows quit and said some one else should be captain, I even agreed to let them choose the captain among them. But that didn't go. They fell into a fuss, and refused to do a thing. You see the kind of a hole I'm in. It looks as if Rockland is afraid of Bangor."

"It certain does," nodded Buckhart.

"That may be the trouble," admitted Winchester; "but I don't believe it. I've an idea that there's something down under this business that I haven't unearthed yet. I hope to find out what it is."

"Well, what have you been doing up this way?" asked Gardner.

"Came up to Bangor to see Holt. Told him the fix I was in, and asked him to cancel the date of the game, or set it far enough ahead for me to reorganize my team. He wouldn't do anything of the sort. Said he was ready to take his team to Rockland to-day, and he proposed to do so. If we fail to meet him to-morrow night, he's going to claim the game and the championship by forfeit."

"Well, dern his pacter!" piped Obediah Tubbs. "He's a mighty mean slob, that's what he is!"

"That's not all he's done," said the Rockland boy. "He was afraid of our team, and he took on Sturtevant and Crabtree, both of whom are rattling good roller polo players. It's up to me, and I'm in a mighty bad hole. I'm going to get together some sort of a team and give them a scrap for it. I don't know who I can get to play. I wish I did. Suppose I shall have to pick up some green kids."

"Look here, Winchester," said Dick. "I've a proposition to make to you. This Bangor chap has broken the rules, and now you're at liberty to do the same. Do you want a polo team on short notice—one that will make it interesting for Bangor, at least?"

"Do I? You bet I do!"

"Then here you have it."

"Where?"

"Right here. I play polo. My friends play polo. If you think we're no good at the game, take us to your rink and give us a trying out."

A strange light began to gleam in Bert Winchester's eyes. He surveyed Dick and his friends with renewed interest.

"Would you mind telling me who you are and where you're from?" he questioned. "Sturtevant knew you."

"We've been camping up at Moosehead, and Sturtevant was there, with a number of friends from Kent's Hill. We had some trouble with him and his crowd. Tell you about that later. We're from Fardale Military Academy, and my name is Merriwell. This is my friend Brad——"

Winchester was on his feet. He clutched Dick by the shoulder.

"Merriwell?" he cried; "Merriwell? Fardale Academy? Why, jingoes! it can't be—it isn't possible! I saw Frank Merriwell when he was here the first time. He played against Rockland with the Camden Baseball Team of the Knox County League. Frank Merriwell—is he any——"

"Brother," said Dick.

"Well, great jingoes!" almost shouted Winchester, as he shook Dick's hand. "I'm certainly glad to know you! I've always remembered Frank Merriwell, but I never dreamed of meeting his brother. Play polo? Well, I'll bet you can! Will I accept your offer? If I don't, I hope some one will shoot me for an idiot!"

## CHAPTER III.

## WINCHESTER PRESENTS HIS NEW TEAM.

"I see where our trip to Boston is broken in the middle, fellows," laughed Dick. "We stop off at Rockland. What do you say to that?"

"You bet your boots it suits me!" exclaimed Buckhart. "If we can just go against this Bangor bunch and trim them scientifically, it will give me a whole lot of satisfaction."

"Me, too, by Jim!" piped Obediah Tubbs.

Winchester regarded Tubbs with an expression of doubt.

"Can he play roller polo, Merriwell?" he asked.

"We'll let you judge when you see us on the floor," said Dick.

Winchester meditated a moment. Suddenly he said:

"Your style of playing may be different from mine. Without doubt you fellows have played together and are familiar with each other. One of you ought to be captain of the team. Of course that means Merriwell."

"But that wouldn't do," protested Dick.

"Why not?"

"It is to be your team. It is to be the Rockland team."

"We can fix that. I'm the manager, see? You're the captain."

"Evidently, I'm to have an unexpected honor thrust upon me," smiled Dick. "Really, I don't like to accept. I'd much rather——"

"It's all settled," interrupted Winchester. "I'm the manager, and you're the captain. We'll go up to the rink to-night and get some practise."

"It's likely your antagonists will put up a howl when they get onto this."

"How can they? They started it."

"I have a suggestion."

"What is it?"

"See this fellow Holt, captain of the Bangor team, right away. Make one last protest against Sturtevant and Crabtree. Tell him that by playing them he's breaking the spirit of the rules. We'll go along with you. If he still insists, notify him that you have made up your team to meet him, and inform him who will play. He won't be able to duck after that."

"It's a good idea," nodded Winchester. "Come on, fellows, and we'll look for Charlie Holt."

A few minutes later they found the members of the Bangor team, including Sturtevant and Crabtree, assembled in the forward saloon. They were chatting and laughing as if greatly pleased over something. Observing the approach of Winchester and his new-found friends, they suddenly became silent.

Bert Winchester singled out a slender, gray-eyed chap, and spoke to him.

"How are you, Holt?" he said. "I've been talking with Sturtevant. Perhaps he has told you about it?"

"Why, no," answered the Bangor boy slowly. "Don't think he's mentioned it."

"He's a fabricator," whispered Buckhart. "They were talking it over just now."

"It was natural he should," said Winchester, "for I told him what I thought of this queer piece of business."

"What queer piece of business are you referring to?" demanded Holt.

"You ought to know, and you do know well enough!" flashed Winchester, finding it difficult to restrain his indignation. "We talked it over in Bangor."

"Oh, harping at that old string, are you? I should think you'd drop it. If you're frightened and don't mean to play us, why don't you say so, like a man?"

"I want you to understand," flung back Winchester, "that the whole of Bangor can't frighten little Rockland! You never did when we used to play baseball."

"Well, what are you making such a fuss about? What's all the squealing for?"

"Nobody's squealing, Holt. Just the same, I protest you're breaking the spirit of the by-laws of this league."

"The spirit be hanged! I'm not breaking the by-laws. Who gave you authority to define the spirit of those by-laws?"

"You know they were not precise enough in one particular, at least."

"That's not my fault. It's too late for you to put up a holler over that."

"You're determined to play two fellows who do not belong in Bangor, are you?"

"Of course you mean Sturtevant and Crabtree?"

"Yes."

"Sturtevant's father owns property in Bangor."

"But he claims a residence in Boston."

"That doesn't make any difference."

"All right. How about Crabtree? Will you drop him?"

"Not on your life! He's eligible."

"How do you make it out?"

"He's a straight amateur, and he's not over nineteen."

"You firmly persist in your determination to play both of these fellows, do you?"

"I think I've told you so several times."

"Very well, Holt!" exclaimed Winchester, his eyes flashing. "As long as you persist in this course, I feel at liberty to follow your example."

"Why, sure you're at liberty. Go ahead. You'll have all day to-morrow in which to get your team together. I'm not fearful that you'll get a bunch together that can defeat the Excelsiors."

"I've made up my team."

"Oh, you have? As quick as this?"

"As quick as this," nodded the Rockland lad, with a touch of deep satisfaction.

"Good gwaithuth!" lisped Oscar Flutterby. "Only a thort time ago he wath thaying he didn't have any team. I gueth that wath all a big bluff. He! he!"

"He! he!" came faintly from Buckhart. "Oh, I'll have to spank it yet! I know I will!"

"Yes, I've made up my team," repeated Winchester. "Here it is."

"Eh? where?" questioned Holt.

"Right here," said the boy from Rockland, with a motion toward Dick's crowd. "Here are Mr. Richard Merriwell and three friends from Fardale Academy, all of whom play roller polo. They've agreed to stop off at Rockland for the game to-morrow night."

"Good gwathuth!" lisped Flutterby again.

"Well, what do you think of that?" muttered Dave Crabtree.

Mortimer Sturtevant frowned and seemed dissatisfied.

Holt surveyed Merriwell and his comrades with an air of amused disdain.

"They don't look very formidable to me," he half chuckled. "Still you're going it pretty steep, Winchester."

"Pretty steep? What do you mean?"

"Why, it seems to me that your team won't have many Rockland fellows on it. It won't be a Rockland team at all, will it?"

"What of that? I'm the manager, and I belong in Rockland. You began this business, and I propose to finish it. If you can play one man on your team who does not belong to Bangor, I can play four men on mine who do not belong in Rockland. You can't get around that, Holt. It's just as broad as it is long."

Holt shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I don't want to get around it," he declared, with a toss of his head. "It's hardly probable that your crude team will make much of a showing against the Excelsiors. I'm glad you found some fellows who dared meet us. Dick Merriwell? Well, I believe I've heard of him. Claims relationship to Frank Merriwell, doesn't he? I thought so. I wonder what his name really is?"

"He! he!" snickered Flutterby. "It's a body blow, Chawlie. What an eathy thing it ith for a chap to travel around under a fictithuth name!"

"It seems pretty easy for some fellows," said the Bangor boy, surveying Dick from head to heels in a manner that was absolutely insolent.

Young Merriwell felt the blood rising to his cheeks, but immediately he took a strong hold of himself and remained cool and collected.

"You're at liberty, sir, to think whatever you like about me; but I wouldn't advise you to express yourself too freely to my face."

"That's right, pard," whispered the Texan, "get after him! Tromp on his coat tail! Walk up his back! Prance on his wishbone!"

"Jutht thee that horwid cow-puncher feller!" said Flutterby. "Thee him whithpering in the other feller's ear. He's a dweadful wude cwecher."

"Your advice is wasted!" flung back Holt, also flushing. "If I have anything to say about you, you can bet your life I'll unhesitatingly say it to your face."

"This is a pretty good time for you to make any

remarks that may be weighing on your mind," suggested Merriwell, stepping forward a bit.

Sturtevant touched Holt's arm.

"Don't get into a scrap with him here, Charlie," he urged. "There are reasons why I don't want anything of the kind to happen."

"All right," said Holt, with an air of resignation. "If you feel that way about it, we'll let him go."

"You're very kind indeed!" said Dick, with a short laugh. "Without knowing it, you may be kinder to yourself than to any one else."

With this remark, he turned and walked away, his friends accompanying him.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DICK DISPOSES OF A MASHER.

"That fellow certainly made me hot!" grated Charlie Holt, as he glared after Merriwell's retreating figure. "I tingled to punch him."

"Weally I couldn't blame you, deah boy," said Flutterby.

"It would do me good to hit him one swift poke," asserted the Bangor chap.

"I don't know about that," came from Sturtevant. "I have an idea that that chap is quite a scrapper. You see I've had some dealings with him up in the woods."

"The more of a scrapper he is, the better it would suit me," asserted Holt. "Do you suppose his name really is Merriwell?"

"Well, I don't know. It may be. If it is, you can depend on it he knows how to play roller polo, and his chums know how, also. We may beat them, but they'll make it hot for us."

"Great Scott, it can't be that you're afraid of them, Mortimer! That's queer!"

"Oh, I'm not afraid of them, but I know how much depends on this game. I've bet a little something on it myself."

"And I've bet enough to break me for awhile if we should happen to lose."

"Pshaw! There's no danger of that!"

Dave Crabtree spoke up.

"I think that fellow is really Dick Merriwell," he said. "It's pretty certain those chaps are from Fardale Academy. I know one of them is. Earl Gardner belongs in Calais. Haven't ever had very much to do with him, but I know he went away to attend school at Fardale."

"Oh, well," said Holt, throwing back his shoulders, "I've always regarded these Merriwells as four-flushers. I suppose Frank Merriwell was pretty clever in his day, but that's no sign his brother is clever. I'll guarantee this young chap is traveling around with the idea that he can alarm people when he tells them his name is Merriwell. If he's the genuine article, it will be all the more satisfaction to down Winchester's new team."

"I have a premonition," said Sturtevant. "Something tells me we are going to encounter a big sur-

prise if this fellow Merriwell plays against us. Winchester is carrying this thing too far, Holt. He has no right to make up his team almost wholly from outside players."

"Well, possibly all of them will not play to-morrow night."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm going to camp on Richard Merriwell's trail. If I get up against him, I'll put him out of business!"

"Perhaps so."

"Perhaps so?" cried the Bangor boy hotly. "There's no perhaps about it! I know it! I can whip that chap in just about one minute, and I'd like the chance to do it. If I ever get the chance, I'll send him to bed, and the doctor will be looking after him to-morrow night."

"Hooway! hooway!" cried Flutterby enthusiastically. "That'th the talk! I'd jutht like to thee you do it, Chawlie! Wathn't he the tharthy thing! Didn't he jutht thtand wight up and talk back to you!"

"I came near punching him then. It was Sturtevant who restrained me. Hello, there's the pretty girl I saw in Bangor! Boys, she's a peach! Just cast an eye at her, but do so discreetly. I'm the only one who can gaze at her with boldness. She's mine."

A girl of sixteen happened to be passing, and she was, indeed, very pretty. For all of Holt's warning, the boys stared at her in a manner that brought a resentful flush to her cheeks, and she quickened her steps.

"Bet you I'll have her before we tie up at Belfast," said Holt boastfully.

"I think she heard you," muttered Sturtevant.

"Oh, I don't care if she did. They like the forward fellows. They make a great bluff that they don't, but when you want to capture one, just rush her off her feet in a hurry, and she's yours before she knows it. The chaps who hesitate and falter always get left. I'm going to follow her, boys."

"I'll go wight along with you," said Flutterby.

"Not on your life!" exclaimed Holt. "That would queer the whole business. Keep away. I'll turn this trick all by my lonesome."

He started away in pursuit of the girl, whom he found at the head of the stairway in the main saloon. Without hesitation and with supreme egotism and confidence, he stepped up to her, lifting his hat and smiling.

"I beg your pardon, miss," he said; "I'm sure we've met before. Let me see. Didn't I see you in the dining-room of the Bangor House the other evening?"

She gave him a flashing look and moved away.

"You've made a mistake, sir," she said.

"Oh, I don't think so," laughed the insolent chap, following her up and stepping round to get in front of her again. "You ought to remember me."

"I never saw you before."

"That's strange. You can't belong in Bangor. My name is Holt. My father is John P. Holt, of the Holt & Cutler Hardware Company."

"Will you kindly go away!" requested the girl, her voice trembling with indignation.

"Now isn't that just like all you girls!" smiled the persistent masher. "Just take a look at me. You can see that I'm a gentleman. You'd like to make my acquaintance if you were introduced in a conventional manner; but just because I take a fancy to you and have the courage to speak to you like this, you get outraged and pretend that you want to throw me down. That's all foolishness! What's the difference whether I'm introduced by a mutual acquaintance or whether I introduce myself, as long as you know who I am, and you're satisfied that I'm a gentleman?"

"I'm satisfied, sir, that you're anything but a gentleman! If you don't go away, I shall appeal to some one to protect me."

"Oh, don't do that! Let's talk it over a bit. Look here, I've one of my cards, if you want proof that I'm giving you my right name."

He produced a card-case and took a card from it, which he offered her. She declined to glance at it, but turned her back on him, again stepping to the head of the stairway.

Now Holt was a fellow who became more persistent whenever he encountered opposition. He was extremely conceited, and believed himself very good-looking and attractive to the girl. A rebuff of this sort exasperated him.

Once more he promptly stepped round in front of the girl.

"You seem to be traveling alone," he said. "You need some one to look after you. I shall consider it a pleasure and an honor."

"You've boasted that you were a gentleman!" she flashed, her cheeks burning and her voice quivering with intense excitement. "Instead of that, you've proved yourself to be a most common, low-bred fellow. I am alone. If I had a friend or an escort, it would please me to see him give you just what you deserve."

"Permit me," said a cool voice.

A moment later Holt felt himself seized by the collar and a slack portion of his trousers, lifted off his feet, swung astride the banister of the stairway, and pushed downward. As he slid down the banister he caught a glimpse of the person who had handled him in this unceremonious manner.

"Merriwell!" he gasped.

Dick Merriwell it was, and he stood bowing before the girl, cap in hand.

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" she breathed. "That fellow was simply horrid!"

"Have you a stateroom?" asked Dick.

"No; I'm going to get off at Rockland."

"Will you permit me to escort you a little farther aft? I fancy that chap will be back looking after me, and he might make some unpleasant remarks."

Side by side, they walked to the rear of the saloon, where Dick motioned toward a chair.

"You'll be safe here," he said. "I promise you he shall not bother you again."

"Thank you!" once more exclaimed the girl, giving

Dick a grateful look. "You're very kind, indeed. I hope you don't have trouble with him."

"I'm almost hoping I do," asserted Merriwell, with a faint, grim smile on his handsome face. "I think a little trouble with that chap just about now would relieve my feelings immensely. Of course, his dignity is greatly outraged. I'm going back to look for him. If he claims satisfaction, I'll have to give it to him."

"Well, I hope you give it to him good!" said the girl, in a manner that caused Dick to laugh outright.

It happened that several of Holt's friends had followed at a distance and watched him in his endeavor to pick up the girl. Therefore, they witnessed the manner in which Dick Merriwell interrupted the masher's efforts. They came rushing forward to the head of the stairway and met Holt as he leaped up the stairs, his face white with wrath.

"Where is that fellow?" snarled the Bangor boy.

"Gone off with your girl," answered Flutterby. "Didn't I tell you he wath a narhty chap! He gwabbed you when you wathn't looking, and then he hurrwid wight away."

"I'll find him!" grated Holt. "He can't run away from me!"

"He hasn't the slightest intention of running away from you," said the voice of Merriwell, as Dick came sauntering forward. "If you want anything of me, Mr. Holt, you can have it."

## CHAPTER V.

### FORCED TO FIGHT.

Quick as a flash, Charlie Holt lifted his clenched fist and made a step toward Merriwell. His friends grasped him and checked him.

"Not here—not in the saloon, old man!" cautioned one of the Bangor boys.

"He's got to fight me!" panted Holt. "I can do him up right here in less than a minute! Let me alone, fellows!"

Dick had his hands in his pockets, and betrayed not the slightest symptom of alarm.

"If you're anxious to fight," he said, "I suppose I'll have to accommodate you, although I hate to soil my hands."

This infuriated the boy from up-river still more. He surged desperately in an attempt to fling aside his friends.

"Hear him!" he cried.

"Hold on there!" commanded one of the officers, hurrying forward with a couple of stewards. "What's the meaning of this business? Now stop that disturbance! There are ladies in this saloon."

"It's a good thing for that fellow that you came along," said Holt. "Did you see him attack me from behind? Did you see what he did?"

"It doesn't make any difference what he did, we'll have no disturbance of this sort here," said the officer.

"If you fellows have a stateroom, you better go to it. If you haven't, you better sit down and keep still."

"He's got to fight me! He's got to fight me!" Holt kept repeating, as he glared at Dick.

"Thath'th wight, Chawlie," said Flutterby. "There can't any one blame you, deah boy. If you don't thmath him, you'll never dare to look at your own reflection in the glath."

In spite of himself, Dick laughed.

"How long since you've looked in a glass?" he inquired.

"Don't you talk to me, thir!" shot forth Oscar, making a little jab at Dick with his fingers pinched together. "I don't care to hear any of your intholenth, thir!"

Merriwell gave Flutterby no further attention, but spoke quietly to Holt.

"You know this is no place for anything of this kind," he said. "I am going through to Rockland. You can see me after we leave the boat. Don't worry; I'll not dodgs you. Officer, I assure you I regret any disturbance I may have created, but I was compelled to act as I did in defense of a girl who was being insulted by this chap."

"That's a lie!" declared Holt. "I knew the girl. She knew me. I was talking with her when this fellow grabbed me behind my back and pitched me over the rail. Luckily I slid down the banister, for I might have broken my neck."

"Well, he's agreed to meet you on shore and settle the matter," said the officer. "That settles it here. Come now, move away from here."

A few minutes later, while Dick was telling his friends what had happened, Sturtevant and two of the Bangor boys came up.

"Merriwell," said Mortimer, "my friend Holt insists on settling this business right away. You can do it on this boat. You can fight him down below on the freight deck, if you want to. Nobody'll interfere down there. The freight hands will enjoy it. What do you say?"

"Mr. Holt seems very impatient," said Dick. "Can't he wait until we leave the boat?"

"He says no. He says he'll follow you up and force a fight somewhere if you refuse to meet him below. It's up to you."

"Well, if it's up to me," murmured Dick, rising to his feet, "I'll have to go down below and see Mr. Holt."

"Whoop!" cried Buckhart. "That's the talk, pard! Go down and put your brand on him!"

"By Jim!" squeaked Tubbs; "I kinder guess there's going to be something doing!"

"We've sent two fellows down to make arrangements with the stevedores," said Sturtevant. "We'll see you down there right away, Merriwell."

Dick nodded, and sauntered away, in company with his friends.

"I'm sorry I've got to fight this fellow," he confessed; "but there doesn't seem to be any other way out

of it. If I don't meet him below, he's pretty certain to keep his word and raise a disgraceful rumpus somewhere else. He might attack me in the saloon or the dining-room."

"I sure hope you're not going to feel too bad over it!" growled Buckhart. "It would give me a whole lot of satisfaction to get at Mr. Holt."

"But fighting is pretty cheap business, any way you look at it," said Dick. "A fellow has to fight sometimes, but I never do so that I don't feel I've lowered myself. Come on, boys."

Ten minutes later, in a clear space on the freight deck, with boxes and bales piled around them and the stevedores eagerly looking on, Holt and Merriwell prepared for the encounter. The Bangor boy seemed to have recovered his self-control, for his nerves were steady enough, but he could not refrain from giving Merriwell an occasional look of intense hatred. They removed coats, vests, and shirts, and rolled up the sleeves of their undershirts. Dick tightened his belt a hole to make sure his trousers would not sag and bother him.

One of the stevedores stepped out and announced that he would referee the encounter.

"My name is Tom Sullivan," he said. "Mebbe youse chaps has heard of me? I've done a little scrappin' meself. I'm going ter see fair play. Is dis goin' ter be a straight-away scrap to the finish, or will youse take it by rounds?"

"There won't be more than one round," said Holt. "When I get after him I'll keep after him until he's finished."

"How does dat suit youse?" inquired the self-appointed referee, glancing at Dick.

"It's satisfactory," answered Merriwell. "The sooner the affair is over, the better it will suit me."

The stevedores had offered the boys soft gloves, but these were indignantly declined by Holt.

"Not much!" he cried. "Couldn't hurt a fly with those things! There's no gloves in this scrap!"

As they advanced, the Bangor lad gave Dick a last flashing look of rage, and said:

"I'm going to mark you up good and pretty, Mr. Merriwell! I suppose you thought you cut a lot of ice with that girl? She'll be proud of you the next time she sees you!"

"There you have it, pard," came from the Texan. "He's announced his intentions. Now ladle out some of his own medicine to him."

"Shake hands," called the referee.

"What—with him?" sneered Holt. "No!"

"Then fly at it, and be careful not to hit foul."

Holt danced at Dick, and they began to spar for an opening.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ENCOUNTER.

The fight was one to arouse the enthusiasm and excitement of the spectators. It was red-hot from the

very start, Holt going after Dick with a savageness that indicated his purpose to do the Fardale boy up in short order. He was quick as a flash, and like a cat on his feet, but, quick as he was, he found an antagonist who met him half-way, and actually seemed to divine his motives before he could execute an intention.

The Bangor boy seemed to think he could rush Dick off his feet. He tried it repeatedly, but every time he was baffled by Merriwell's clever foot-work, until he became extremely vexed.

"Why don't you fight? why don't you fight?" he snarled. "This is no sprinting match!"

"That's right, young feller!" shouted one of the grinning stevedores. "Stand up and fight! You've got to hurry this business to git it through before we make the next landing."

Brad Buckhart turned to the speaker, with a serene smile.

"Stranger," he said, "don't you worry any whatever. It will be all through before we picket this old boat at the next stockade. When my pard lets himself loose, you'll see the fur fly a-plenty. You hear me gently murmur!"

About this time Dick let himself loose a little, for he met one of Holt's rushes with a stiffness that gave the Bangor boy a shock of surprise. This shock was nothing compared with the one felt by Holt when Merriwell slammed him twice on the ribs and followed with a bang on the side of the head that caused him to reel against a pile of boxes.

"Oh, wow—wow!" shouted several of the freight handlers. "What lovely ones! what lovely ones!"

"Gwathuth thakes alive!" gasped Oscar Flutterby. "Look out for him, Chawlie, deah boy! Don't let him wap you that way! He'th playing trickth on you! He'th leading you on jutht tho he can get a chanth to thlam you!"

Had Dick followed up the advantage, he might have caught Holt off his guard. He seemed to hesitate a moment, and in this moment the lad from Bangor recovered, turned like a raging wolf and came at the Fardale boy. Holt's teeth were drawn back from his lips, and there was a white froth in the corners of his mouth. His rather good-looking face had lost all its attractiveness in an expression of malignant fury.

"So that's your game!" he grated. "So that's what you've been playing! Well, I'm onto you now! You won't do it again!"

Sturtevant placed a hand on Dave Crabtree's arm, and in Crabtree's ear he whispered:

"I was afraid of this. Merriwell is the best man."

"Do you think so?" asked Dave.

"I'd bet on it. He's got the best head. Holt has lost his already. He thought he was going to jump in and whip the other chap in short order. Now he realizes that he may have lots of trouble about it, and he's furious."

"Well, if we see he's getting hammered too much, we can interfere."

"I don't believe we'll be permitted to interfere until Holt throws up the sponge."

"Not permitted? Why not?"

"Look at these husky freight-handlers; they're all eager to see a fight to a finish. They'll demand that the fellow getting the worst of it cries quits."

"Well, we're not to blame if Holt does get thrashed."

The Bangor lad tried to recover his composure, but when Dick danced in and tapped him twice with perfect ease, he charged again, making a furious left-hand swing.

Merriwell went under his enemy's arm, came up behind him like a diving duck, and tapped him back of the ear.

"Those are simply love pats," chuckled Buckhart. "If my pard had ever swung his shoulder into that blow, it would be all over now."

Again Mortimer Sturtevant shook his head, and whispered to Crabtree.

"There's no doubt about it—Merriwell can outpoint Holt."

"Yes," said Dave; "but if Holt had landed then, Merriwell would be down and out now."

"He won't get in a wallop like that. Merriwell's too clever, Crabtree."

"I admit that Merriwell's clever, but he may not have the punch to put Charlie out. He hasn't shown it yet."

At this juncture the fighting lads came together, and Holt clinched, endeavoring to weaken Dick with several rapid kidney blows while hanging on.

"Break! break!" roared Sullivan, jumping in and thrusting his arms between them, spreading his elbows to force them apart.

On the break-away Merriwell uppercut Holt and caused him to look dazed.

Before the Bangor boy could recover, Dick sprang in and hit him a jolt on the eye that sent him to the floor.

"Wow! wow!" yelled the stevedores once more. "That was a jab in the blinker! That eye will go into mourning!"

"Hold on here—hold on!" shouted one of Holt's Bangor friends, as he sprang out. "This thing must stop! Charlie is up against a professional!"

Sullivan grasped the fellow by the shoulder and gave him a surge that sent him whirling into the arms of another stevedore.

"The feller what's down," said the referee, "came here and fixed dis match up hisself. When he gits enough, he'll say so—he'll throw up the sponge. Nobody'll mix up in dis business as long's I'm on me pins."

"That's right! that's right!" shouted the freight-handlers.

Then Sullivan turned to Holt and demanded:

"Have youse got enough?"

"No!" panted the fallen lad. "Got enough? I should say not! I'll finish him yet!"

With an uplifted finger, which made a downward beat with every number, Sullivan began to count:

"One—two—three——"

"Hold on!" came from Holt, as he hastily started to rise. "What do you think you're doing? Don't try to count me out!"

The referee grinned.

"This is to be a stright fight to the finish," he said. "That's right. If you're going to continue, git up and git at it."

Dick waited quietly for Holt to rise. He did not rush his enemy as the boy rose from his knees. On the contrary, Holt crouched and rushed at Dick, dodging a blow and grappling.

Instead of grasping his antagonist, Merriwell held his arms clear of the fellow and waited for the referee to force a "break."

Charlie Holt shoved Dick across the floor and flung him furiously against the edge of a huge box, seeking to pin him there, with the corner cutting into his back.

There was nothing of gentleness in the manner in which Sullivan seized Holt and forced him to break.

"Dis is no wrestlin' match, me friend," reminded the referee. "Don't try dat trick again."

"Dirty! dirty!" cried several of the spectators. "He can't fight fair, and so he tried to put the other feller out that way."

Dick was not hurt, but he had received a lesson, and he knew that Holt would resort to any expedient in order to win.

"Are you all right, pard?" anxiously asked the Texan.

Dick nodded and smiled.

"By Jim!" piped Obediah Tubbs; "he tried to break Dick's back!"

"That's what he did! that's what he did!" breathed Earl Gardner. "He flung him on the corner of that box intentionally."

Holt's eye was puffing up swiftly, with every indication that soon it would be closed. He realized that he had not landed a telling blow on Merriwell, and this filled him with a feeling of despair and anger which threatened to burst his heart. There was no flush in his face now, all the blood seemingly having left it. Never in his life had he been deceived in a fellow the way he had been deceived in Merriwell.

"I'll get him yet—I'll get him yet with a wallop!" he mentally cried. "Can't escape me every time."

They were at it again, and for a few moments Holt sparred, ducked and dodged with skill that prevented Dick from reaching him even with a light tap. Of a sudden, Charlie fancied he saw an opening, and plunged in, striking for the body with his right and swinging at Dick's jaw with his left.

The body blow was blocked and the other blow parried. Dick leaped back a bit and then came forward. Out flashed his fist, landing on Holt's mouth.

The head of the Bangor boy went backward, and a moment later his teeth were covered with blood, for his lip had been split.

"It's tough—tough!" muttered Sturtevant regretfully. "Charlie will be a sight if Merriwell keeps at him much longer."

Again one of Holt's Bangor chums made an attempt to interfere, but was promptly seized and pushed to the rear by the stevedores.

"You've got him, Young Lightning!" shouted one of the pleased freight-handlers, waving his hand at Dick. "Oh, say, boy, you're a corker! So help me, this is the greatest scrap I ever saw!"

"It's one-sided," reminded another spectator.

"That's so," admitted the first speaker; "but the chap who's getting the worst of it is a fighter. He knows how to handle himself. They are just about of a size, and both are in fine condition."

Holt paid no attention to his bleeding lips, but went into the fight again with all the fury that had possessed him at the start. Evidently the punishment received had not weakened or checked him.

Biff!—Dick landed on the Bangor boy's nose.

There was more blood, and Holt presented a really pitiful spectacle.

"Charlie was going to fix him so he would be ashamed of himself when he looked in the glass," said Sturtevant, in a low tone. "Charlie's the one who will be ashamed."

"Can't any one get the best of this Merriwell?" muttered Crabtree. "Is he a chap who always comes out on top? It begins to look that way. He certainly got the best of us up in the woods."

Sturtevant shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm going to follow that fellow up a little," he said. "I believe I'll find some way to do him up. I shan't fight him, but it would give me intense satisfaction to defeat him somehow."

"We'll do that to-morrow night in the polo game."

"I hope so."

"Hope so? Don't you think so?"

"You never can tell. It will depend on Holt a great deal. If he loses his sand after this, we may be defeated."

"But this scrap may make him more determined than ever. In that case——"

"In that case we'll have the pleasure of defeating the new Rockland Rattlers."

The fight had continued, but Merriwell did not seem to press it hard for a few moments. During these few moments Holt's nose began to fill up, and he breathed with difficulty.

"You're whipped," said Dick. "I don't want to punish you any further. Why don't you acknowledge that you've had enough?"

"Acknowledge it?" came huskily from the other boy's throat. "Never! You'll have to kill me before I'll ever acknowledge anything like that!"

"I hate to hit you again."

"Oh, I suppose so!" sneered the Bangor lad.

"You're very sorry over this business! But, look out! I'm going to land on you before I'm through!"

Holt's judgment was poor, but certainly he had

plenty of sand, and it was true that Merriwell actually hated to strike another blow. Dick saw, however, that in order to end it he would have to put his enemy "down and out."

In a few seconds the opening came, and the Fardale lad improved it. Holt tried again to land with his "wallop." The swing was a wide one, and left him unguarded for an instant. In that brief space of time, Merriwell's right fist banged against the pit of his foe's stomach with a sickening chug, and this was followed by a left-hand drive on the jaw that stretched the Bangor lad on the floor.

Standing over the fallen boy, with his index-finger beating off the numbers, Tom Sullivan counted Holt out.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ARRIVAL AT ROCKLAND.

Dick Merriwell went directly to his stateroom and washed up. Having arranged his toilet, he came forth, looking perfectly fresh and unruffled, as if nothing of an unusual nature had taken place.

Brad Buckhart continued to chuckle over the remembrance of the encounter.

"That gent certain got what was coming to him," said the Texan. "He went looking for trouble, and he found it."

Dick seemed a trifle downcast.

"Holt has plenty of sand," he declared. "The fellow may have his bad qualities, but certainly he's not a quitter. You'll have to admit that, Brad."

"Oh, he didn't quit," acknowledged Buckhart. "He kept it up until you finished him off. You might have done it sooner, partner. Why didn't you?"

"I didn't like to," answered Dick. "I thought it possible he'd acknowledge himself defeated. When you fight a fellow and knock him out, it begins to seem like ordinary prize-fighting. Of course, there was some excuse for me in this case."

"Excuse? Whoop! I should say so! Why, you had to fight, pard—you had to! You couldn't get out of it!"

They entered the main saloon and came upon Bert Winchester. He was talking earnestly with a girl. To the surprise of Merriwell, he recognized the girl he had saved from annoyance by Holt.

Immediately upon observing Dick, this girl smiled at him, while Winchester turned and motioned for Merriwell to approach.

"Permit me to introduce Miss Spear, Mr. Merriwell," he said. "Miss Spear, Mr. Buckhart."

"Proud to know you, Miss Spear," said Brad, with a profound Texas bow. "It certain is a great honor to me."

"Miss Spear has been anxious about the trouble between you and Holt," said Winchester. "She stopped to ask if I knew anything about it. I didn't know she was on the boat before that. It was quite a surprise to

discover the girl you protected from Holt was Lucy Spear. She's on her way to Rockland to visit an uncle."

"Oh, Mr. Winchester has been telling me that the fight was just a terrible one," said Lucy Spear. "He says you had to whip that other boy dreadfully hard before he would stop."

"Yes, he seemed to be a most determined chap," said Merriwell. "Wouldn't give up. To his credit, I confess he's no quitter."

"Did he hurt you much? I don't see that he has injured you."

Buckhart grinned.

"No," he said, "I don't opine he hammered up my pard a great deal. He was up against the real thing, and Dick did a scientific job. Now he's ashamed of it. He's moaning to himself because he had to fight at all."

"And I'm to blame for it all!" exclaimed Lucy Spear regretfully. "Oh, I'm so sorry! I'm so ashamed!"

"You're not in any way to blame," instantly declared Dick. "You couldn't help it. Don't feel that way about it."

"Oh, I can't help feeling that I'm to blame! Only for me you'd not had to fight him. I hope he isn't hurt a great deal, even though he was insulting to me."

"Oh, not a great deal!" chuckled Buckhart. "One of his eyes is buttoned up a-plenty. He has a split lip and a few loose teeth, besides getting a crack on the nose that canted it toward the east."

"Dreadful!" gasped Lucy. "Why do fellows have to fight?"

"I don't blame you for feeling that way," said Dick. "It's anything but gentlemanly, but there are occasions when one is forced into it."

"And Richard Merriwell has trained himself a-plenty to meet just such occasions," explained the Texan.

Again Lucy Spear gave Dick her hand.

"I'm greatly indebted to you, Mr. Merriwell," she said. "I won't forget it."

"I assure you it was a great pleasure to be of any service to you," bowed Dick.

Winchester gave Buckhart a nudge and suggested that they had better look up the other fellows, at the same time adding that Dick should entertain Lucy awhile. Dick quickly said that it would be a pleasure, and so they were left together.

In the meantime, Charlie Holt had been revived and fanned, and rubbed down until he was in condition to proceed to a stateroom. The fellow had little to say. He seemed downcast and crushed. In the stateroom he regarded his bruised features in a mirror. Then he sat down on a little stool and swore.

"I don't blame you, deah boy," said Oscar Flutterby. "It'th weally an outwage! I can't thee how he did it, doncher know."

"You underestimated him, Charlie," said one of Holt's Bangor friends. "You thought you were going to do him up too easily. That's where you made a big mistake."

"But I'll do him up some day—I'll do him up some day!" grated Holt. "This doesn't end it! Don't you think for a minute this ends it! No chap ever marked me like this before! Look at my eye! Look at that lip! Say, boys, somebody must get me a piece of beef-steak."

One of the boys hurried away, finally returning with a piece of raw beef, which was bound on Holt's eye.

"Leave me here," commanded the captain of the Bangor Excelsiors. "I'm not going to show myself until we get off at Rockland. I'm going to stay right here. Oh, I'd rather be alone! Get out!"

"I'll thtay to thooth you," suggested Flutterby.

"Get out!" snarled Holt. "I don't want you around! I don't want anybody around!"

"Ithn't it terrible when a feller feelth like that!" sighed Oscar, as they left the stateroom and closed the door on the downcast and humiliated boy.

Holt did remain in that stateroom until the boat whistled for Rockland. When he came out he had his hat pulled down as far as possible over his bandaged eye, and the high collar of his overcoat was turned up about the lower part of his face.

He was one of the first to hurry off the boat. As he hastened up the slip, a freckled-faced young fellow standing there suddenly seized his arm and pulled him aside.

"Here, you!" exclaimed this fellow. "I'm waiting for you. Don't be in such a hurry."

"What's the matter with you, Filing?" growled Holt. "I don't want to see you here. I don't want to be seen talking with you. Winchester is on the boat. He'll be coming off in a moment."

"I want that momey," said Filing. "I want the rest of it."

"You'll get it, all right."

"Oh, that's easy to say, but when do I get it? I want it right away."

"Meet me in an hour at the Thorndike," said Holt, pulling away from the fellow. "I'm going to stop there. Now don't speak to me again until I see you there. I'll walk up to the desk. Then you can follow me."

As he turned away, he noticed with a start that Dick Merriwell had left the boat and paused a few feet away. However, Dick seemed utterly unconscious of Holt's proximity. He was watching the passengers as they came off, and in a moment he called to his friends, asking them why they were so slow.

"He didn't see me," thought the Bangor boy. "He didn't hear anything."

Holt was mistaken. Dick did not hear everything, but he had distinctly heard the appointment to meet the fellow called Filing in the Thorndike Hotel.

"Who's Filing?" speculated Merriwell.

Bert Winchester came off the boat with the rest of Dick's friends. Merriwell was interested immediately when the chap called Filing hastened to greet Winchester.

"Hello, Bert," he said. "Come down to look for you. But what's this business mean? I thought you were going to stop those fellows from coming."

"What fellows?" asked Winchester.

"Why, the Bangor team. You didn't stop them; they're here. Saw them get off just now."

"No, I couldn't stop them. They wouldn't make any other arrangements, and they insisted on coming and claiming the game by forfeit unless we met them."

"Jingoes! you're in a scrape!" exclaimed Filing. "What are you going to do?"

"Oh, I think I'll find a way out of it."

"How?"

"Come up to the hotel with us, and I'll explain. Wait a minute, here are some friends of mine. I want you to meet them."

Winchester then introduced Milt Filing to Dick, Brad, Earl, and Obediah.

After the introduction, Filing whispered behind his hand into Winchester's ear:

"Who are they?"

Winchester smiled.

"I told you they were friends of mine. They're going to stop at the Thorndike. I'm going up there with them, and see that they're properly cared for. Come along."

At this moment Merriwell heard his name called by a familiar voice, and turned to see Lucy Spear a short distance away with a clean-cut young fellow at her side. He approached, lifting his hat.

"Mr. Merriwell," said Lucy, "I want you to meet my cousin, Rob Spear. Rob, this is Dick Merriwell, the gentleman I've been telling you about."

Rob Spear gave Dick's hand a hearty grasp.

"I have to thank you, Merriwell, for your kindness to my cousin. She says you protected her from Holt, the Bangor polo player, who tried to pick her up. Says you had to fight Holt, and that you whipped him. I noticed he has a bandage over one eye."

"It was a great pleasure to be of service to Miss Spear, even though I found it necessary to encounter Mr. Holt afterward," said Dick.

"Are you going to stop in town, Merriwell?" asked Spear.

"I shall be in town over to-morrow, I think."

"Won't you call on us? Here's my card and address. I'm sure we'll be delighted to see you."

"Thank you," said Dick, as he accepted the card and slipped it into his pocket.

Then Rob Spear escorted Lucy to a carriage, and they drove away.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DICK'S SUSPICIONS.

On reaching the Thorndike, Charlie Holt kept in the background while Mortimer Sturtevant registered and secured rooms for the Bangor team. Sturtevant had finished, and was turning away when Bert Winchester came in with Merriwell and his friends.

The affable clerk smiled as Winchester approached the desk.

"Hello, Holt!" he said. "I see your Bangor friends are on deck."

"Good evening, Mr. Donahue," nodded Winchester. "Yes, they're here. They've come down to wipe us off the map."

"Well, it looks as if they will do it easily enough, doesn't it? According to what I hear, you haven't any team."

"Don't believe all you hear," retorted Winchester. "I have a team, and the Excelsiors will have to keep busy if they wipe us off the map. Here's my team. I'm going to register for them. Can you take care of them in first-class shape?"

The clerk surveyed Dick and his companions.

"Oh, yes," he nodded, "we'll look after them, all right. Been holding a couple of our best rooms for some people who have not arrived. Said they'd be here two hours ago. Guess they're not coming. They're connecting rooms at the front of the house. Think they'll suit your friends, Bert?"

"If you say so, they ought to; but we don't want to take anything that another party has reserved, you know."

"That's all right," declared the man behind the desk. "As I told you, the party said they would surely be here two hours ago. Therefore, as they have not appeared, and we have no word from them, there's no reason why I should hold the rooms longer. The gentleman who phoned for them is rather eccentric, anyhow. I understand that it was his son who registered for the Bangor team just now."

"Whew!" whistled Winchester. "You mean Mortimer Sturtevant? His father phoned for the rooms you're speaking of? Well, what's good enough for Augustus Sturtevant ought to be good enough for my friends."

"I don't think we'll kick," smiled Dick.

Winchester introduced Merriwell and the others to the clerk, who seemed to be a polo enthusiast, and greeted them all warmly.

"I hope you fellows can play the game," he said. "Winchester is in a bad hole. It was mighty mean for our boys to go back on him the way they did, and I don't understand it. Bangor has a strong team. They've brought one or two new players this time. But, see here, Bert, how are you going to play outsiders on your team?"

"That's what Bangor's doing," answered Winchester. "Sturtevant really has no right to play with them. This fellow, Crabtree, who is with them, belongs in Calais. They've come down here to beat us, anyhow."

"I'm afraid they'll do it! I'm afraid they'll do it!" muttered the clerk, shaking his head grimly.

"Well, look here, Mr. Donahue," put in Buckhart, "be just as afraid as you have a mind to, but let me advise you some. Don't bet any money that they'll beat us, unless you've got money that you haven't any use for."

The clerk laughed.

"Well, I like the sound of that talk," he said. "And Bert certainly knows that he has my best wishes. Here, boy, show these young gentlemen up to their rooms."

He handed two keys to the bell-boy, and Winchester's new polo team was conducted to the rooms assigned.

These rooms proved to be, indeed, the best in the house. There was a connecting door between them, which was a convenience.

While the boys were washing up there came a knock on the door, and Milt Filing walked in, smiling broadly.

"You told me to come along, Bert," he said, "so I'm here. Your friends have the swell rooms of the house, haven't they? How'd they happen to get them? I glanced at the register and saw the fellows from Bangor were ahead of you."

"Oh, these rooms were reserved," laughed Winchester.

"Oh-ho!" exclaimed Filing. "That's different. You must have known you were going to bring these fellows along with you. I thought it possible you ran across them by accident—met them on the boat, or something like that."

"Evidently somebody's been telling him something," thought Dick.

Merriwell was not pleased with the appearance of Milton Filing, but he treated the fellow decently on Winchester's account.

"What have the fellows been doing while I was away?" asked Bert.

"Oh, nothing but talk," answered Filing. "I've given them all a piece of my mind. Didn't seem to have much effect. They're quitters. That's what they are. Say we won our other game from Bangor by a fluke. Say we ought to be satisfied to drop it while we're tied with the Excelsiors. Claim it won't really make any difference if Bangor does claim the championship by forfeit."

"Now that's fine talk for them to make, isn't it?" cried Bert, in disgust. "It doesn't sound like Dolby. Never knew him to play the quitter before."

"Bangor's strengthened," said Filing.

"Yes."

"I'm afraid we couldn't win now under any circumstances. Don't think I'm not ready to try. You know I've stood by you."

"That's right, Milt," nodded Winchester. "You're the only fellow who has stood by me through it all. Merriwell, Filing was our substitute player. If any one had reason for quitting, he was the chap. Used him as a stop-gap, that's all. He's a good man, too."

"Thanks, Bert," grinned Milton. "I hope I'm not egotistical or selfish. I wanted to see Rockland down Bangor, that's all. I was willing to help if I could; but, if I wasn't needed, I was ready to stop in the back-ground."

"That's the right sort of spirit, isn't it, Merriwell?" said Winchester. "At least, I have one chap I can depend on."

"It looks that way," agreed Dick.

"I presume you fellows are pretty good at polo?" questioned Filing, turning to Merriwell. "Anyhow, I hope you're the real hot stuff."

"We can play the game a little. We'll abide by Winchester's judgment after he sees what we can do."

"That's fair enough, isn't it, Milt?" laughed Bert. "Say, you have the keys to the rink, haven't you?"

"Sure."

"Can you get together enough players to make up a scrub team? I mean, can you get them together right away, within an hour?"

"You're going to practise?" questioned Milt.

"That's it. We want to practise to-night. We'll need a scrub team."

"Well, I'll do all I can. I think I can pick up some fellows, though I'm not sure they'll be crackerjacks."

"Go ahead, old man," urged Bert. "Don't lose any time about it. We're hungry. I'm going to eat here with my friends. We'll go up to the rink afterward. You be there, and have everything ready for us."

"Depend on me," nodded Filing. "I'll get a hustle on. So long, boys. See you at the rink."

"Milton's all right," said Winchester, after the fellow departed. "It's peculiar, too. He's not reckoned so much among the fellows. There were two or three on the team who objected to him even as a substitute. You see, his father's a rather shady character. Got arrested once for some sort of crooked business, and the reputation stuck by him. His mother's pretty ordinary, too. All the same, you never can tell what a fellow'll turn out to be. Milton's never done anything questionable that I know of."

"Excuse me a few moments, fellows," said Dick. "I want to get a paper. I'll be right back."

"Why don't you ring and have a paper sent up?" called Winchester. But already Merriwell was out of the room.

"I'm not quite so well satisfied with Mr. Milton Filing as Winchester is," he thought, as he walked toward the stairs. "The fellow never looks any one in the eye. To me he has something of a hang-dog expression. I saw him talking familiarly with Holt. There's something in this business that Winchester hasn't tumbled to yet. Holt and Filing were going to meet here at the hotel."

He descended to the office, and was just in time to see Milton Filing sauntering away toward the public wash-room. A second glance showed him Holt stepping into that room.

Merriwell paused, and waited a few moments. Then he quietly sauntered in the same direction. Apparently taking no pains to do so, he really stepped with the softness of a cat.

The door of the wash-room stood open. As Dick approached, he heard the voice of Filing and caught these words:

"—practise in the rink to-night."

Then Charlie Holt swiftly said:

"They mustn't do it! Understand that, Filing? I'll

leave it to you. Can't stay here. Don't want to be seen talking to you. Here's the money."

Dick reached the doorway just in time to see Holt hand something to Filing, who quickly slipped it into his pocket.

"Milton Filing is a traitor and a sneak," decided Merriwell, as he quickly passed, without being observed.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GREAT AUGUSTUS P.

Purchasing a newspaper, Dick started to return to his room. Near the desk in the office he paused, his attention being attracted by the loud words of a pompous-looking, red-faced man, who was shaking his fist at the clerk.

Beside this pompous person, and slightly to the rear, was a small, thin, washed-out man, who carried two dress-suit cases.

"What's that you say, sir?" roared the big man, thumping the desk. "You've given up the rooms I ordered reserved for us? What do you mean by it, sir? How dare you give them up?"

"You're Mr. Augustus Sturtevant, are you?" asked the clerk, quietly surveying the excited man. "Well, Mr. Sturtevant, you phoned us that you'd be here by three o'clock this afternoon. You asked us to reserve the rooms until that hour. Am I not correct?"

"I phoned you I'd be here," flung back the big man. "That was enough! When Augustus Sturtevant says a thing, he means it. You had no right to let those rooms go. I want them—understand? I want them! Who has them, eh?"

"Unfortunately you're too late, Mr. Sturtevant. I'll give you other rooms—the best we have left."

"Look here, young man, I never take the second best. Wherever I go, I have the best in the house. Is it possible you don't know my reputation? Is it possible you haven't heard about me?"

"Oh, I know your reputation, sir. I've heard about you. I assure you we're sorry we were not directed to hold these rooms longer, but that's not our fault. They were kept fully two hours after the time you gave us. Some boys have those rooms."

"Boys? You've given those rooms to boys? Well, the way to fix that is to send up and transfer those boys to other rooms."

"No, that isn't the way to fix it. I explained to them that the rooms had been held for you, but you had not appeared. I practically assured them that there would be no question about their right to them. Under no circumstances would I ask them to move now."

"Here! here!" snarled the timber king, once more pounding the desk. "I want to see the proprietor! I demand to see the proprietor of this house!"

"I'm afraid you can't, sir; he's in Boston."

"Well, who's manager while he's away?"

"I am."

"And you have the impudence to treat me, Augustus

P. Sturtevant, in this manner! Come, sir, you're treading on dangerous ground! I'll make a complaint against you, and I'll push it! I'll see that you're reprimanded! You may lose your job, sir!"

"I'm not afraid about that, Mr. Sturtevant. You're making something of a disturbance here. You're attracting considerable attention. I'll have to ask you to desist."

The clerk was polite and unruffled. He did not lift his voice in the slightest, and it was plain the bellowing of the timber king had not alarmed him a hair.

"I'll leave this hotel! I'll take my patronage away from it!" threatened Sturtevant. "I'll tell my friends how I was treated here! It will hurt you."

"You have a perfect right to leave. We can't stop you."

"Now, that's further insolence! Coxby, that's insolence!"

"Yes, sir," said the small man, in a mechanical tone of voice, "that's insolence, sir."

"If there's one thing I won't stand for, it's insolence from a hotel clerk. I won't stand for it, Coxby."

"No, sir, you won't stand for it."

"Do you wish to accept other rooms, Mr. Sturtevant?" inquired the clerk.

"No, I don't wish to!"

The clerk turned away, as if the matter was settled.

"Hold on!" roared Augustus, pointing a pudgy finger at the man behind the desk. "What are you going to do now?"

"Attend to my business, Mr. Sturtevant. It seems that I can't serve you. You'll find the St. Nicholas a short distance down the street. If you don't like that, you may go round the corner to the Narragansett."

"I didn't ask you to recommend hotels to me! What do you think of it, Coxby? He recommends hotels to me!"

"He recommends hotels to you, sir," said Coxby.

"I'll stay right here," declared Sturtevant; "I'll stay right here! I'll write out a complaint in full, and see that the proprietor receives it."

He seized a pen and sprawled his name across the page of the register in huge letters, which would have shamed John Hancock, had John been alive to see them.

"Augustus P. Sturtevant, Boston," he wrote.

"Um, Boston?" said the clerk. "You don't reside in Bangor?"

"Bangor—reside in Bangor? No, sir; I reside in Boston. I do business in Bangor, but I don't reside there."

"I believe your son is playing on the Bangor polo team. You see he's registered here."

"Eh? hey? Mortimer here? Well! well! The last I knew of the boy he was up in the woods. I'll have to see him after dinner."

"Supper," corrected the clerk. "We have supper here at this hour."

He rang a bell as he uttered this reminder, calling a

boy, to whom he passed two keys, directing that Sturtevant and Coxby should be conducted to the rooms assigned them. The boy took the suit-case from Coxby, who toddled along behind Sturtevant like a little lamb. As they departed, the clerk gave Dick Merriwell a smile and a wink.

"I did think of asking you if you would give up those rooms, Mr. Merriwell," he said, "but I was afraid you'd give them up."

"There was not the slightest danger of that after I heard Mr. Sturtevant expressing himself in that manner," answered Dick. "Had he come to us like a gentleman, or had you sent a request for us to change, I'm sure we'd have done so."

"Mr. Sturtevant is in the habit of having his own way in everything. He doesn't make requests; he gives orders. It's a great shock to him whenever his orders are not promptly obeyed."

"I hope he won't make trouble for you."

"Not the slightest danger of that."

When Dick and his friends came down to supper they were seated at a table next to that taken by the Bangor polo players. The Excelsiors were all there, with the exception of Charlie Holt, who had decided, on account of his injured eye, to have supper in his room.

"Good gwathuth!" lisped Oscar Flutterby; "I weally feel like moving, fellerth! I don't like to thit tho near theth cheap chapth. Weally I don't. I think we'd better call the head waitor and athk him to plathe them at another table."

"Oh, don't pay so much attention to them," advised Mortimer Sturtevant.

Brad Buckhart laughed in a low, derisive manner, but made no comment.

Two minutes later there were heavy steps outside the dining-room door, and Augustus P. Sturtevant entered, with Coxby toddling along at his heels. The head waiter hastened to Sturtevant, saying:

"Right this way, sir. Your table is ready for you."

"Where is it?" demanded the timber king.

"Right there by the window, sir."

Sturtevant looked the table over disdainfully.

"Where's the celery?" he demanded. "Why didn't you fix the table up right? Is that a fresh cloth?"

"It's just spread for you, sir," said the head waiter.

"Huh!" grunted the timber king. "These Maine hotels are the limit, but a man has to stop at them. I say they're the limit, Coxby!"

"They're the limit, sir," said Coxby, in the tone of a bleating sheep.

The dishes on the tables rattled as Augustus P. Sturtevant strode heavily toward the one prepared for him. The waiter hastened to draw out a chair and stand ready to place it properly when the mighty man should deign to be seated. But Sturtevant was once more surveying the table with a baleful and dissatisfied eye.

"What's that bread?" he asked. "I called for French bread. That's not what I ordered!"

"I'm sorry," said the waiter, "but we haven't any French bread in the house. This is some of Rising's best."

"Huh! Rising's best? It looks heavy enough to be Sitting's worst! Who's Rising, anyhow?"

"He's our baker."

"What? Baker's bread—baker's bread at this hotel? Don't you cook your own bread? Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"We ran out to-night, sir. Rising has a reputation for making fine bread. I think you'll find it better than our cooks could produce."

"Huh!" grunted Sturtevant, as he started to lower himself upon the chair.

"Hello, gov'nor!" called a voice.

The big man turned and looked.

"Well, well! It's that boy of mine!" he said. "How are you, Mortimer?"

"Oh, so, so, dad," answered young Sturtevant, with a careless wave of his hand. "You'll excuse me if I don't rush over to shake hands. I'm a bit tired, don't you know."

"Oh, say, Mortimer," muttered Dave Crabtree, hiding a grin behind his napkin, "is that the way you meet your old man? If I ever did that to mine, he'd lead me forth to the stable and apply the strap to the seat of my trousers."

To the surprise of Sturtevant's companions, the timber king left his table and came over to shake hands with his son, Coxby doddering along behind.

"How'd you make it shooting, boy?" questioned Augustus. "Told me you were going to get a moose this trip. Did you get one?"

Apparently something amused Brad Buckhart, for he burst into laughter, while Obediah Tubbs gave a little choking squeal, and began stuffing his napkin into his mouth.

Mortimer turned crimson and flashed an angry glance toward Merriwell's table.

"No, I didn't get a moose," he admitted. "I shot one, but I lost it. You see I didn't kill the beast, and some other fellows, who were hunting in the vicinity, finished it. By the way, we had more or less trouble with these other chaps. They bothered us a great deal."

"Oh, they did, did they? Well, why didn't you order them off?"

"We did."

"Didn't they go?"

"No."

"Is it possible—is it possible? Who were they?"

"They're sitting at the next table," said Mortimer, smiling in spite of himself.

Augustus P. swung round with the grace of an elephant and glared at Merriwell's party. In return, the boys all looked him straight in the eye, not a little to his discomfiture, for he found that not one of them quailed beneath his terrible glance.

"These fellows—these boys?" he questioned. "They bothered you? You can't mean them, Mortimer!"

"But I do, gov'nor. They're the ones. By the way, I understand they have the rooms you ordered reserved for you here."

"What?" roared the timber king, his red face getting purple. "Are those the chaps? What do you think of that, Coxby? There they are!"

"There they are, sir," said Coxby.

At this point the situation seemed to strike Dick Merriwell as extremely ludicrous, and he burst into laughter, which caused Augustus Sturtevant to quiver with every vibrating sound. The big man started for Merriwell's table, as if bent on annihilating Dick and his friends.

"Look here, boy," he said, shaking a finger at the laughing lad, "I won't have it! Stop it! No one laughs at me!"

"Evidently the people who meet you must be sadly lacking in a sense of the ludicrous," said Dick, feeling justified in speaking out to this offensive, overbearing man.

Sturtevant gasped for breath.

"Did you hear him, Coxby?" he demanded. "Why, he has the cheek to talk back to me! He talks back to me, Coxby!"

"He talks back to you, sir," said Coxby.

"Now look here, boy," continued the mighty man of the Maine woods, "you've been trespassing. You were ordered off my property. I understand you refused to go."

"Wait a minute, Mr. Sturtevant," came promptly from Dick, "do you own that land?"

"I own timber rights there."

"That doesn't give you authority to order any licensed sportsman off. We paid for our licenses, and we had a right to shoot there. Your son attempted to bluff us, but the bluff didn't work. Knowing our rights, I don't think *you* can bluff us, sir. Better sit down and eat your supper."

"Wait a minute. I know my rights in the woods. I say you trespassed. I can make trouble for you, but I'll let it pass in case you give up those rooms which were reserved for me, and which you now have."

"You're very kind!" said Dick, with biting sarcasm. "Still I'm afraid we don't appreciate your kindness. We expect to give up those rooms in a couple of days or so. If you remain until then, you may be able to secure them."

"Insolent young cub!" rumbled Sturtevant, as he turned toward his own table.

"Insolent young cub," parroted Coxby, as he followed.

## CHAPTER X.

### NABBED BY THE POLICE.

It is doubtful if Augustus Sturtevant enjoyed that meal, for he must have heard the frequent bursts of laughter which came from the table where Dick and his friends were eating.

Bert Winchester's admiration for Dick was growing by leaps and bounds. Dick's perfect self-possession and coolness under all circumstances delighted Winchester.

"I don't believe Augustus Sturtevant has been up against anything like that in months before this," he said. "You took some of the wind out of him, Merriwell."

"Oh, it will take more than that to let much of it out," smiled Dick. "I've seen men like him before to-night."

"They're always a big bluff," put in Buckhart. "They make a lot of noise and impress some people, but when they go up against any one who is not impressed, they invariably slump a-plenty. Who's the calf that follows the mighty chief around?"

"Must be a private secretary or something of that sort," said Gardner.

The boys remained at the table until young Sturtevant and his companions had finished, and left the room. Augustus P. shoveled away his food in great haste, and lost no time in getting out.

"Now, boys," said Winchester, as they left the dining-room, "we'll go over to the rink. Filing will be there by this time with a picked-up scrub team."

The rink stood on a side street that proved to be rather dark. As they approached it, Winchester uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

"That's funny!" he said.

"What?" questioned Dick.

"Place isn't lighted. I supposed Filing would have it lighted up by this time."

Merriwell could have told him something about Milton Filing, but refrained from doing so, thinking it

best to have absolute proof before making any accusations.

When they arrived at the door of the rink Winchester's disappointment turned to vexation, for the place was locked, and there were no signs of Filing.

"This is mighty strange," declared Bert. "He said he'd be here. He must be still hustling to get some fellows together. All the same, he should have opened up the rink for us."

"We'll have to wait, won't we?" questioned Gardner.

"Looks like it."

Wait they did, and fully thirty minutes passed with no sign of Milton Filing. Winchester grew indignant, and finally exclaimed:

"I'm not going to stand out here in the cold any longer!"

"Are you going to give up getting in?" asked Gardner.

"Not on your life! I'm going in."

"How?"

"I'll find a way. I know how. Come on."

They went round to the rear of the rink, and Bert was lifted until he could get at a window, which he proceeded to open.

Suddenly, without warning, two men rushed on them and seized them.

"Don't try to get away, you young rascals!" cried one of the men. "If you do, you'll get hurt! We'll put the irons on you!"

"The irons?" gasped Obediah Tubbs. "By Jim, we're pinched!"

In truth, the two men were police officers, and they seemed confident that they had captured five culprits who were attempting to break and enter.

"You're making a mistake, officer," said Winchester.

"Now don't give us any bluff, young feller. There's been a lot of this business around town lately, and we're going to put a stop to it."

"But you ought to know me. You ought to know my father. He's Crosby Winchester."

"What?" exclaimed one of the men. "Crosby Winchester? It's Bert Winchester! Good Lord! has he gone into this business? It's too bad! His father will feel pretty rotten over this."

"Well, you're certainly off your trolley!" burst from Bert, in great indignation. "We're not breaking and entering. You ought to know that I have hired this rink and paid for the use of it in advance. We have a right to get in here."

"It looks like it when you climb in at a back win-

dow!" sneered one of the policemen. "If you have such a right, why didn't you go in by the door?"

"Another fellow has the key. We couldn't get in at the door. We waited for him half-an-hour, and he didn't show up."

"You'll have to tell that story to-morrow. It won't wash with us to-night. It's a shame to take Crosby Winchester's son to the lockup! Look here, Bert, will you agree to appear in court when summoned?"

"Appear in court! Now, stop where you are, officers! You're not going to lock anybody up!"

"You bet your life we're going to lock these other fellows up!" assured the officer. "We'll let you go because we know your father. We don't know them or anything about them."

In spite of all Winchester could say, the policemen insisted on marching Merriwell and his friends off to the lockup. Bert followed, still continuing to remonstrate over the outrage.

At the corner of the first street where there was a lamp they came face to face with a man, who paused and surveyed the officers and their captives curiously.

"Hello, McGrath!" he said. "What have you got?"

"Got some housebreakers, Mr. Harman," answered the officer called McGrath. "Caught them breaking and entering, and I'll bet you can't tell the building they were getting into. It was your rink."

"What?"

Bert Winchester sprang forward and seized Harman by the arm.

"This is luck, Mr. Harman," he said. "I was the one who was climbing into the window of the rink. Milton Filing had the key. He was to open it up, but he didn't appear. We waited for him until we got tired. Then I called the fellows round to the back window, and they lifted me, while I opened it. We were going in to practise. This is my new polo team. The other fellows went back on me. I picked these fellows up on my way from Bangor. Then the cops nabbed us, and they insisted on locking my friends up."

"Oh, I don't think they'll do that," laughed Harman. "It's all right, McGrath. Winchester had a right to climb into the window. Let those chaps go."

Both policemen seemed highly dissatisfied, and they released the boys with a show of disappointment and regret.

"They hardly like to let us go now," said Dick. "It seems a little queer to me."

"Now hold on, young feller," growled McGrath, turning fiercely on Dick, "don't give us any of your lip! We won't stand for it! You're a suspicious char-

acter, and we may take a notion to lock you up, anyhow."

"Don't say a word, Merriwell—don't say a word!" whispered Winchester, in Dick's ear. "There's something behind this business. They knew me. They know I'm not a housekeeper. If they can find an excuse, they'll lock you up now."

Needless to say, Brad Buckhart was literally boiling to express his feelings, but he realized that it might be a mistake to talk just then, and, for once in his life, at least, he kept still without being cautioned to do so by Dick.

"Come on, boys," said Mr. Harman; "I have a key to that door. I'll see that you get in in the regular manner, and run no risk of being arrested again."

They followed him back toward the rink.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TRUTH OF THE CROOKED BUSINESS.

"Here are skates, sticks, suits, everything we need," said Winchester, as he opened the dressing-room of the rink, and pressed the button to turn on the electric lights.

"Where?" asked Dick.

Winchester looked around in astonishment.

"By jingoes," he cried, "the stuff is gone! Somebody's been here and sacked the place! Now what do you think of that?"

"I think," said Merriwell, "that you have enemies at home here, who are determined you shall not put any kind of a team against Bangor to-morrow night."

For a few moments Winchester seemed stunned, but, suddenly, he revived and began to express himself in language that was decidedly warm.

"They can't work it!" he almost shouted. "I won't stand for it! Wait here, boys. I don't think Spofford has closed yet."

"Who's Spofford?" asked Dick.

"The man who handles Spalding's goods in this town. He put in an extra large stock of polo stuff this season."

Winchester seemed to take the measure of Dick and his friends with his eyes, and then, after once more telling them to wait, he rushed out.

"This business is a whole lot queer, pard," observed Buckhart.

"Yes," acknowledged Dick, "it is queer. I could tell Winchester something that would put him on the right track, but I don't thoroughly understand what's doing myself."

In less than fifteen minutes Bert Winchester returned, followed by a young man and two boys, who were bearing loads of polo stuff in their arms. There were jerseys, knee breeches, stockings, sweaters, skates, shin-guards, sticks, balls, in fact, everything to outfit a roller polo team.

"There," cried Bert, as the stuff was tossed on a wooden table, "I'll show them they can't monkey with me in this fashion! I've made a few dollars that I meant to contribute to the Rockland High School Athletic Association, but I'll spend every cent of that money, and as much more of my own, if I have to, in order to meet Bangor to-morrow night. I've bought this stuff. It's mine. I think I've got suits to fit every one, unless Tubbs is excepted. I couldn't find anything for him."

"By Jim! I'll just practise in my own clothes to-night," said Obed. "I'll skin right down to trousers and undershirt, and you keep your eye on me. You fellers in your new rigs will have to git up and git if you outshine O. Tubbs, Esq."

At this juncture, as the boys started to make ready for practise, Milt Filing came rushing in, apparently quite out of breath.

"So you're here, are you, Winch?" he exclaimed. "Awfully sorry, by George! Couldn't get around sooner. I've been scraping the town to get some fellers together for a scrub team. No use! Can't do it! They won't come, Bert—they won't come. They're all sore, or something's the matter with them."

"Well, that's fine!" exclaimed Winchester, in great vexation. "I'm getting proud of my own town! Did you try to get Andy O'Brien?"

"Sure. Said he was busy. Had another engagement."

"Did you ask Pete Wilkins?"

"Couldn't find him. He's off up to Camden, they say."

"Well, how about Jerry Culver?"

"I found Jerry. He said he wasn't helping you now, after you had overlooked him so long. Said he should have been on the team in the first place."

"Jerry can play polo," admitted Bert, "but he's unreliable. He's a fellow who drinks. I couldn't take chances with such a chap."

"Well, you can't get him to help you now. In fact, you can't get any one, Bert. I'm the only chap who sticks by you."

"I don't suppose you asked Jack Norman?"

"Oh, yes, I did. I gave everybody a chance to turn me down and laugh at me. Norman said you could

go straight to blazes. Said you had a crust to think you could run roller polo in Rockland. Said you were a bum manager and captain."

"Norman is the fellow who thought he ought to be captain of the team," Winchester explained to Dick. "Well, it's evident we're not going to have a team to play against us in practise. We'll go into it and do our best alone. We can get our positions and loosen up a little on the rollers."

Although he did not seem observant, Merriwell was watching Filing, and he noted that the fellow surveyed Winchester's new team's outfit with an air of surprise. Suddenly Filing seemed to notice something, stepped over to the table and handled the stuff.

"What does this mean, Bert?" he asked. "This is not the team's stuff. It's all new."

"Yes, it's all new," said Winchester, with a touch of bitterness. "Some of my fine friends in town came in here while I was away and lugged off our complete outfit. Didn't leave as much as a used-up ball."

"What? Swiped it?" cried Filing, with an air of incredulity. "You don't say so! Well, now, wouldn't that beat you! I think that is just about the limit! By George, you ought to be hot under the collar, Bert—you have a right to be!"

"Oh, I am," confessed Winchester. "If I get any hotter, my collar'll take fire. I'm going to put the police onto this piece of business, and if I find out who stole that stuff—well, he'll be sorry!"

Filing seemed to think of something of a sudden, for he gave the side of his head a crack with his knuckles, muttered to himself, and then said:

"I'll be back directly, Bert. Perhaps I can help you out. Won't be gone more than ten or fifteen minutes."

He rushed from the room and hurried out of the rink.

Now it happened that Merriwell had stepped outside on the surface ere Filing left the dressing-room. There was only one light in the big rink, and Filing failed to see Dick standing in the shadows. Nor did the fellow suspect that Merriwell followed him like another shadow.

The moment he passed outside the Rockland boy turned quickly and dodged round the corner of the building. Dick slipped to the corner and paused, for he heard voices and knew Filing had found some one waiting there.

"How can they practise?" an unfamiliar voice was guardedly asking. "They haven't any outfit."

"Winchester's bought a new outfit complete," answered Filing.

Instead of waiting to hear anything more, Merriwell ran back into the rink, his feet making scarcely a sound. Rushing to the dressing-room, he grasped Winchester by the arm and whispered in his ear:

"Come outside! Follow me, and don't make a sound!"

"What is it, pard?" eagerly asked Buckhart. "Can we do anything?"

"Nothing but stay right here and keep still," answered Dick.

Filled with wonderment, Winchester followed Merriwell outside, and together they crept toward the corner of the building. Dick feared that Filing and his confederate would be gone, but the sound of their muttering voices gave him a sensation of relief and satisfaction. Placing his lips close to Winchester's ear, he whispered:

"Edge close up to the corner and listen!"

Bert complied. Keeping close to the Rockland boy, Merriwell heard further talk between Milt Filing and his companion.

"Threatens to put the police on the case, does he?" said the fellow with Filing. "Well, he'll make a lot out of that! The stuff's tucked away where all the police in Rockland can't find it! I took care of that all right."

Bert Winchester began to quiver all over.

"The sneak!" he whispered. "I didn't think it of him! That's Jack Norman."

"Hush!" warned Dick. "Listen!"

"Good for you, old man!" chuckled Milt. "We've done everything we agreed, and it isn't our fault if Winchester does put a team against Bangor. Holt wanted the championship, and he'll get it, I guess. These fellows can't beat him. He's bet a lot of money that the Excelsiors would be champions."

"And I know he's already paid you a good slice out of the money he expects to win," said Norman. "I want my share of that money, and I want it now, Milt."

"Oh, I haven't got a cent from him yet!" protested Filing. "I told you I would give you half if you could break up the team and turn the fellows against Winchester. You've done a fine job, Jack, and I'll divvy with you just as soon as Holt comes down with the dough."

"You can't play that on me, Milt! I know Holt's paid you something. You were flush to-night. I saw you flash your roll. Where'd you get it? Come now, cough up!"

"Well, by heavens!" panted Bert Winchester, "this is the dirtiest piece of business I ever knew anything

about! Oh, I'm going to sail into those fellows in a minute!"

"Now you understand what's happened!" Dick whispered back. "The mystery is cleared up! If you want to sail into them, go ahead! I'm with you!"

That was enough for Winchester. With a spring, he dashed round the corner and confronted the two rascals.

"You're a pair of low-bred, dirty sneaks!" he cried, his voice shaking with rage. "I didn't think it of either of you! You're a cur, Jack Norman! So you smashed the team and stole our paraphernalia? You ought to be proud of yourself, Filing! You've pretended all the time that you were my only friend. You're a sneaking hypocrite! I suppose I was a fool to expect anything better of you. Blood will tell!"

Both Filing and Norman were astounded and filled with dismay. They realized they had been fairly caught, but seemed to decide on a bluff.

"What do you mean by talking to me like this, Winchester?" snarled Norman. "I won't stand for it! You can't call me names, even if I did come around to see what you were doing in the rink!"

"You're all at sea, Bert!" protested Filing. "You have no right to throw it into me this way!"

"That kind of talk won't go, you cheap sneaks!" palpitated Bert. "I heard you! I heard Norman confess that he stole our paraphernalia!"

"You're a liar!" cried Norman, as he suddenly struck Winchester on the cheek.

"That's right!" burst from Milton, who took his cue from Norman. "Soak him! Give it to him!"

Filing's upraised fist was caught and gripped by five iron fingers. Dick Merriwell was on the spot, and he prevented Milton from hitting Winchester. Not only that, but with his other hand he nailed Filing behind the ear, and sent the fellow to his knees.

Winchester leaped at Norman, and, during the next fifteen seconds, there was a furious encounter, in which the Rockland High School boy got so much the worst of it that suddenly his courage deserted him, and he took to his heels.

"Want anything of this fellow, Winchester?" asked Dick, who had seized Filing as the young scoundrel dragged himself to his feet.

"Just turn his back toward me a moment. That's right. This will relieve me some."

Winchester swung his right foot backward and brought it forward with such force that Milton Filing was actually lifted at least a foot from the ground, and pitched forward at full length.

"There, you low-down sneak!" exclaimed Winchester. "That's all I want of you! If you ever speak to me again, I'll give you two swift kicks in the same place! Come, Merriwell, we'll go back."

## CHAPTER XII.

### WINCHESTER MAKES THE TRUTH KNOWN.

The boys got in such practise as they could without the aid of a scrub team. Winchester observed them closely, and his satisfaction grew apace. He discovered that Merriwell was a wizard on roller-skates, swift in dashing, and alert in dodging, ready-witted and cool-headed under circumstances which might rattle a player, and full of resourcefulness.

"Where do you play, Dick?" Bert asked.

"Anywhere you put me. You're the manager."

"But you're the captain. You act to me like a rusher."

"If you think I'm fast enough for a rusher——"

"Think? I know you are. You and I will be the rushers. Where do you think Tubbs should play?"

"What do you think about it? You had an idea that Tubbs wouldn't be very fast."

"I've changed my mind. For a fat chap, he's just about as lively as they make 'em. I don't see how he gets around the way he does."

"He ought to make a good center," suggested Dick.

"That's the place for him," said Winchester. "And Buckhart is an ideal half-back. He's stocky, quick, and fearless, and, therefore, just the chap for that position. But the question is, can Gardner cover the net?"

"Let's try him," suggested Dick. "Let's put him in front of the net and see what he can do."

Gardner soon satisfied Bert Winchester that he was just the man to tend goal. Again and again they rushed in on him, and made all sorts of drives for the net, but he stopped the ball in the most skilful manner, failing only when pushed hard and receiving no support from Buckhart.

"It's all right!" cried Winchester, as they paused and wiped their perspiring faces. "Now we'll get together and talk over our style of playing a little. We'll wind up by doing some passing, and making a few long shots for the net."

After practise was over, Bert hurried straight to the office of the *Daily Star*. The *Star* was a morning paper, and, therefore, the full force was already at work upon it.

It happened that Winchester knew the news editor, who was at the phone, getting some reports from the New England Press Bureau. As soon as the editor found time to spare, he gave his attention to the caller.

Winchester told him the whole story of the difficulties with his polo team. He made it brief, although he omitted nothing. He told how he had traveled to Bangor and entreated Charlie Holt to postpone the final game, in order to give him time to get another team together. He impressed the fact that Holt had refused to do this, had strengthened his team with two non-resident players, and had come to Rockland, stating he should claim the game by forfeit if Winchester failed to meet him. Nor did Bert omit to tell how one of the Bangor team had nearly caused him to lose the steamer at Bucksport by falsely stating that the hour of departure was 3:14 P. M., instead of 2:45 P. M. He told how by chance he had met Merriwell, who saved him from a cold ducking, as he missed his hold on the rail when he sprang aboard the steamer, which was swinging out from the Bucksport pier. Then he went on to fully clear up the mystery of the strange behavior of his Rockland associates on the team.

"You needn't mention Jack Norman's name," he said; "but Norman used his influence to break up the team. Back of Norman was Milton Filing, who has received money from Charlie Holt, if he would carry this dirty scheme through. Norman stole our whole outfit for the team from the rink. I heard him tell Filing he had hidden it where the police never could find it. Now, sir, these are the plain facts of the matter, and I hope you'll state the case in the *Star* tomorrow morning, so that the public may understand."

"I certainly shall, my boy," nodded the news editor. "Why, jingoes! you've given me a regular sensation, Winchester. I suppose you're certain all your statements are correct? If you had proof, I'd print the names of these fellows who have been at this dirty business."

"Dick Merriwell can substantiate me, sir; but I don't want you to print any names. I'm going to urge the police to follow this thing up. If they can find that stolen stuff, Jack Norman will be in a scrape."

"All right, my boy. There goes the telephone: I'll have to answer the call. I'll tell the story as you've given it to me, stating that you are my authority for it."

"Thank you, sir," said Bert, and went away in a satisfied frame of mind.

The *Star's* story on the following day created a sensation and no end of talk in Rockland. Winchester

was known as a reliable, truthful chap, and most people were inclined to believe the newspaper report. There were a few, however, who claimed it could not be true. They insisted that no local high-school boy would enter into such a compact. It was their belief that Winchester had told the yarn in order to win sympathy for himself.

Nevertheless, the fact that Bert had secured a new team and was ready to meet Bangor and fight to the finish for the championship aroused a certain amount of interest and enthusiasm. After supper that evening people began to flock toward Elmwood Rink.

The hour set for the game to begin was eight o'clock. Before that time the players of both teams appeared on the surface, and took a little practise. The Excelsiors were received with a burst of applause from a number of young men, the leader of whom proved to be Jack Norman.

"There are the winners!" cried Norman brazenly. "They'll knock the spots off Winchester's bunch, all right."

"Hooway! hooway!" cried Oscar Flutterby, standing up in the front row of the balcony and fluttering his hand toward Norman. "There's a gentleman who knowth weal polo playerth when he theeth them. You're jutht wight, thir. I congwatulate you on your thagathity, thir."

"Oh, fudge!" shouted some one on the opposite side of the rink. And the great crowd of spectators burst into a shout of laughter.

"The wude, narthty cwecher!" exclaimed Flutterby, glaring across at the laughing chap who had shouted "fudge."

Augustus P. Sturtevant, accompanied as usual by Molesworth Coxby, sat in one of the best seats. The timber king beamed on his son, and threw out his chest.

"Fine boy, that youngster of mine, Coxby," he said.

"Fine boy, sir," said Coxby.

"Look at him!" urged Augustus P. "Why, he's as spry as a cricket! Just see him scoot around on those rollers! Look at that! See him scoop the ball! I'll guarantee he'll be the star of the Excelsiors to-night. I say, he'll be the star of the Excelsiors to-night, Coxby."

"He'll be the star of the Excelsiors to-night, sir," said Coxby.

"Here comes the Rockland team," chuckled Sturtevant. "Now, how do they expect to defeat Bangor? They can't defeat Bangor, Coxby!"

"They can't defeat Bangor, sir."

At this moment there was a great hand-clapping, which seemed to be led by a group of girls in the balcony at one end of the rink. These girls unhesitatingly stood up and waved their handkerchiefs as the Rattlers skated out from the dressing-room. Dick Merriwell noticed them, and, glancing up, he saw, prominent in the very center of the group, Lucy Spear. She smiled on him, and he bowed.

"There he is, girls—there he is!" exclaimed Lucy. "Look at him, every one of you! That's Dick Merriwell—that's the fellow who fought for me and whipped Charlie Holt, of Bangor! What do you think of him, girls?"

"Oh, he's splendid—he's splendid!" they agreed.

"He's almost as handsome as Bert Winchester," admitted one of the group.

Instantly several of them turned on her laughingly.

"Almost, Agnes?" they exclaimed. "He's handsomer than Bert! You'd admit it if you weren't prejudiced."

"I'm not prejudiced," declared Agnes, blushing furiously.

In a short time the referee appeared. He held a consultation with the timekeeper, and finally turned, and blew a sharp blast on his whistle.

The game was about to begin.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### NOT AT ALL SATISFACTORY.

RATTLERS, ROCKLAND.	POSITIONS.	EXCELSIORS, BANGOR.
Winchester.....	First Rush.....	Sturtevant
Merriwell.....	Second Rush.....	McHugh
Tubbs.....	Center .....	Holt
Buckhart.....	Half-back .....	Clinton
Gardner.....	Goal-tend .....	Crabtree

Never in the history of Elmwood Rink had there been a more hotly contested game.

Still, the Excelsiors seemed to get the bulge on the Rattlers at the very start. It was Sturtevant who uncovered the spot in the rush with Winchester, and Mortimer deftly snapped the ball across to McHugh, who found himself confronted by Merriwell, but passed to Holt in time to baffle Dick. Holt shot over the surface, dodged to the right and left, found himself cornered, and passed to Sturtevant. Sturtevant took the ball while at full speed, and went past Tubbs like a flash.

Buckhart leaped to block the rush, but Sturtevant made a singular feint as if to pass the ball back to Holt, following which he shot it at the net.

A great yell went up from the admirers of the visiting team, for Gardner failed to touch the ball, which was in the net.

The whistle sounded.

"First goal for Mortimer Sturtevant," announced the referee. "Time, thirty-one seconds."

"Oh, good gwathuth, how eathy! how eathy!" cried Oscar Flutterby, standing up and waving his hands, with the result that he lost his balance and nearly pitched over the rail in front of him.

"I told you what would happen, Coxby," chuckled Augustus Sturtevant, in high satisfaction. "I say I told you what would happen, Coxby."

"You told me what would happen, sir," said Coxby.

During the next five minutes of play the Rattlers seemed decidedly rattled. Bangor had things pretty much her own way, for she succeeded in making three more goals with comparative ease.

The spectators began to hiss and groan.

"Better pick up a new team, Winchester!" cried a voice.

"That's right! that's right!" shouted another. "This one's no good!"

Bert Winchester looked grim.

"What's the matter, Merriwell?" he asked. "We're getting it in the neck, and the crowd's sore. Look here, old man, you rush next time. Sturtevant seems too fast for me."

Therefore, on the next charge, Dick rushed, instead of Winchester. He came out onto the floor with astonishing speed, and snapped the ball off the spot just as Sturtevant made a scoop for it. Not only that, but Merriwell dodged past Mortimer, sent the ball to the right of Holt, who came charging in, passed Holt on the left, recovered the ball, avoided Stockton, and finally drove hard for Bangor's net.

Crabtree blocked, and the ball bounded back. Dick secured it and drove again.

Crabtree stopped it with his foot and kicked it away.

Before Dave could recover, Merriwell got the ball away from Clinton, who was reaching for it, and sent it whizzing into the net.

The whistle shrilled.

"Fifth goal, Richard Merriwell," announced the referee. "Time, nine seconds."

"Well, well, well!" bellowed a Rockland man. "What an accident! what an accident!"

"That'th jutht what it wath!" cried Oscar Flutterby, but his words were drowned in a great cheer.

"Oh, girls, he can play—he can play!" palpitated Lucy Spear, clapping her hands. "I told you he could! I knew it!"

"I was beginning to be afraid you were mistaken," laughed one of the others.

From this time until the close of the first inning the game was warm indeed, with neither side securing more than a slight temporary advantage. No more goals were made.

The Rattlers retired to their dressing-room during the first intermission.

"By Jim, we're beauties!" piped Obediah Tubbs, in supreme disgust. "Somebody ought to pin a bunch of leather medals on us! Dick's the only fellow who's done anything."

"We've just begun to play," smiled Bert Winchester. "The trouble was that we needed practise. We couldn't seem to work together. Those fellows didn't do much with us toward the close of that inning."

Dick's hand fell on Winchester's arm.

"I see your friend Norman is leading a bunch of cheerers from Bangor," he said.

"Oh, yes, he's up there with a few soreheads. All the same, he hasn't got everybody with him. Two of my old players came to me to-day and said they were sorry for what they had done. They read the story in the *Star*, and I rather think they believed it, too. Norman is having a good time now, but he's liable not to feel so good before long."

In Dick's ear Winchester whispered:

"One of the officers who is working on the case told me to-night that he knew where the stolen stuff was hidden. Norman took it to an old woman down on the Point. The officer thinks he can frighten her into confessing that she received it from Norman. If so, that fellow may be pinched before this game ends."

As a substitute, Winchester had secured Fox, the young manager of the Rockport Y. M. C. A. During the game, Fox was constantly waiting to jump out onto the floor, if needed.

"Don't forget that you're the captain of this team, Merriwell," suggested Winchester, in a low tone. "I want you to run things."

Dick called the players round him, and talked to them quietly just before they returned to the surface.

The second inning began with a rush by Sturtevant and Merriwell, and once more Mortimer's anger and confusion showed itself as Dick uncovered the spot.

Never in that rink had there been another inning like that one. Time after time, one goal or the other

was threatened, but brilliant work by the goal-tends and their assistants prevented scoring. Charlie Holt made no less than nine drives at the net, every one being stopped and spoiled by the clever deftness of the Rattlers.

On the other hand, Bert Winchester failed to score, although he was given repeated opportunities to do so. The deftness of both goal-tends aroused intense enthusiasm among the spectators. If anything, Gardner had more work than Crabtree. Some of Earl's stops were marvelous.

"Well, this is a real game of polo now!" shouted one of the Rockland spectators. "Why didn't they play like that in the first place?"

"I think our boys are toying with them, Coxby," said Sturtevant. "They have the game well in hand, and they're monkeying with these other chaps. I say they're monkeying with them, Coxby."

"They're monkeying with them, sir," said Coxby.

Had the timber king known more about roller polo, he would have realized that there was no monkeying business in that game. The Excelsiors were doing their level best, and they were greatly disappointed over their failure to pile up a larger score against the Rattlers.

When the second inning ended, with no further scoring by either side, the spectators sat back in their seats, and sighed.

Oscar Flutterby leaned over the balcony rail, and called to Sturtevant, as the latter skated off the floor.

"It's all wight, Mortimer, deah boy! It's a thinch! You nailed the game wight off the weel."

In the dressing-room, Charlie Holt was inclined to growl at his players.

"You're getting dopy, you fellows!" he declared. "Why don't you wake up? We should have scored half-a-dozen times that inning. Now let's quit this foolishness, and climb all over them. We can do it. Four to one doesn't satisfy me. The only thing I'm sorry about is that they secured that one."

"You must acknowledge, old man, that Merriwell is a corking player," said Sturtevant. "I think he's just about the swiftest amateur I ever saw. You know he's a pretty good man at anything."

"Oh, rot!" growled Holt, involuntarily lifting one hand to his injured eye, from which the swelling had not wholly disappeared. "He's lively and lucky. It won't satisfy me merely to win this game. Some day I'm going to transact further business with Richard Merriwell, and, when I'm through with him, he'll be sorry he ever ran against me."

"By the way, Holt," said Mortimer, in a low tone, glancing around, to make sure the others did not hear, "that story in the *Star* was pretty bad business. What have you done about it?"

"Written a denial, and the editor of the *Star* has agreed to publish it. It will appear to-morrow morning. Winchester can't prove anything. I've been told by certain fellows that he hasn't a bit of proof."

"Well, I hope people take stock in your denial," said Mortimer.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A GAME WORTH WINNING.

Back to the surface returned the two teams. The referee spotted the ball, and retired to one side, lifting the whistle to his lips.

If the second inning had been exciting, it may be truly said that the third and final one was actually hair-lifting. Both teams seemed possessed by a sort of furious energy that caused them to play like fiends. At the very start, Sturtevant succeeded in stopping a pass from Merriwell to Tubbs. He snapped the ball away from Obediah, and went shooting toward the Rattlers' net. Dick dashed at Mortimer, but was blocked and tripped by Holt.

Somehow, the referee failed to see this foul.

Again Gardner made a beautiful stop, and sent the ball spinning away from the net. McHugh got it, and shot it to Sturtevant, who charged again. Merriwell left his position on the floor, and dashed in toward his own goal.

Sturtevant shot again, and the ball became mixed up with Gardner's feet. Earl recovered in time to take it and dodge away, as McHugh tried to poke it into the net.

Buckhart looked after McHugh. Gardner snapped the ball toward Merriwell, and turned toward the net, to resume his position.

Dick made a spring to secure the ball, and his skate came off.

Sturtevant saw his opportunity, and embraced it before the referee's attention could be called to Dick's misfortune, or Fox, the substitute, could get onto the floor. He secured the ball, and, with a clean, sharp stroke, drove it into the net.

Augustus P. Sturtevant laughed until he grew purple in the face.

"I knew they were monkeying," he said. "I tell you, I knew they were monkeying with those fellows, Coxby."

"You knew it, sir," said Coxby.

But now a strange thing happened. Dick's misfortune had forced him to retire until he could adjust his skate and another goal should be made. Fox filled his position on the floor. While Dick was strapping on his skate and making it secure, he was startled to hear a blast from the whistle. Looking up, he saw that Obediah Tubbs had driven the ball into Bangor's net.

This gave Dick a chance to get back into the game, Fox retiring.

The score now stood five to two, in favor of the Excelsiors, and the game was drawing toward a close.

Holt growled at his players because Rockland had secured another count. They did not like this, and some were inclined to retort.

The referee lost no time. He spotted the ball, got away, and blew his whistle.

Out shot Merriwell, and once more he took the ball off the spot, and went dodging here and there along the floor, carrying the little sphere toward Bangor's goal.

Clinton sprang out to interfere.

Dick dodged him, and made a peculiar, snapping stroke, which landed the ball in the net.

"What's the matter with Dick Merriwell?"

"Play for your lives, fellows!" muttered Dick, as the two teams changed positions. "We've got to fight hard now. There's still a chance for us."

There was a chance, for, within one minute of the close, Winchester made two goals in rapid succession, and at last the game was tied.

By this time, Charlie Holt was almost frothing with disappointment and rage.

"I have a tip from Flutterby," he said to his players. "There's less than a minute more to play. If we can make another goal, the game is ours. We've got to do it! I tell you, we've got to do it! Great Scott! you don't know what it means to me if we fail!"

In the very fast mix-up which followed, Holt tried to hit Dick over the head with his stick. The referee saw this, and promptly reprimanded the Bangor captain, threatening him with punishment if he repeated the foul.

The truth was that Holt had lost his head. When the captain of a polo team loses his head, the rest of the team is pretty sure to go to pieces. This very thing happened with the Excelsiors. The Rattlers actually swept them off their feet, and, within ten seconds of the finish, Brad Buckhart drove the ball into Bangor's net.

This placed Rockland in the lead, and during the next ten seconds she came near scoring again. Had the game continued a few minutes longer, it is likely Rockland would have made several more goals.

At last the gong clanged, and the game was over.

There was a sudden commotion in one of the balconies. Looking up, Dick Merriwell saw that two uniformed officers had grasped Jack Norman, and were taking him away, in spite of the protests of his companions.

Somebody called Winchester to one side of the rink. A moment later, Bert skated back, and spoke to Dick.

"You saw them taking Norman," he said. "A friend of mine told me they've arrested Milt Filing. The old woman peached on Norman. Filing has confessed. Everybody will know the truth to-morrow."

The boys had finished dressing, and were about to leave the room, when Rob Spear appeared at the door.

"Is it all right, fellows?" he asked. "I have some lady friends here who would like to come in."

"Sure it's all right," answered Winchester. "They may come in now."

"Come on, girls," called Rob.

Into the room came half-a-dozen laughing girls, followed by a middle-aged man and woman. One of the girls advanced toward Dick.

"Mr. Merriwell," she said, "I want you to meet my uncle and aunt. Uncle Stephen, Aunt Sarah, this is Mr. Merriwell."

"Give us your hand, boy," chuckled Stephen Spear, as he grasped Dick's fingers. "You played a marvelous game. Now we're going to take you up to the house, you and the rest of the team. The girls have everything arranged. We're going to have a little supper-party. Oh, it's all right; this is no evening-clothes affair. It's perfectly informal, and we want you to have a corking good time. Mrs. Spear and I will chaperon you, and we hope you'll forget we're there."

THE END.

The Next Number (511) Will Contain

## DICK MERRIWELL IN THE RING;

OR,

## THE CHAMPION OF HIS CLASS.

Four Passengers—Sturtevant Challenged—Joe Hurley. Sturtevant Meets Hurley—Exposing the Crook. Rescued from the River—Jaegles Apologizes for Hurley—The Classes of the Club—The Best Man. An Honor for Dick—Whose Money?—An Encounter in Chinatown—Getting His Just Deserts.

Beware of cheap imitations of the Tip Top Weekly. Frank and Dick Merriwell and their friends appear only in the pages of Tip Top. BURT L. STANDISH writes exclusively for Tip Top and has been the author of the ONLY and ORIGINAL Merriwell stories for over nine years.

### About the Early Numbers of Tip Top Weekly

We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print.

We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays."

We give herewith a complete list of all the stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored cover catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

The Price of The Merriwell Books is Ten Cents per Copy. At all Newsdealers

Frank Merriwell at Yale.	Medal No. 205.	10c.
Frank Merriwell Down South.	Medal No. 189.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Camp.	Medal No. 258.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in England.	Medal No. 340.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Europe.	Medal No. 201.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Maine.	Medal No. 276.	10c.
Frank Merriwell on the Road.	Medal No. 300.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Athletes.	Medal No. 233.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour.	Medal No. 217.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Book of Physical Development.		
	Diamond Hand-Book No. 6.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Bravery.	Medal No. 193.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Champions.	Medal No. 240.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Chase.	Medal No. 271.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Chums.	Medal No. 167.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's College Chums.	Medal No. 312.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Courage.	Medal No. 225.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Cruise.	Medal No. 267.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Danger.	Medal No. 251.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Daring.	Medal No. 229.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fame.	Medal No. 308.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's First Job.	Medal No. 284.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Foes.	Medal No. 178.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fortune.	Medal No. 320.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Great Scheme.	Medal No. 336.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck.	Medal No. 292.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.	Medal No. 197.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Loyalty.	Medal No. 254.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's New Comedian.	Medal No. 324.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Opportunity.	Medal No. 288.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Own Company.	Medal No. 304.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Problem.	Medal No. 316.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Prosperity.	Medal No. 328.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Protege.	Medal No. 296.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Races.	Medal No. 213.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale.	Medal No. 244.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's School-Days.	Medal No. 150.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Secret.	Medal No. 247.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Skill.	Medal No. 237.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield.	Medal No. 209.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.	Medal No. 332.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Struggle.	Medal No. 280.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Trip West.	Medal No. 184.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Vacation.	Medal No. 262.	10c.



NEW YORK, January 20, 1906.

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**STREET & SMITH'S TIP TOP WEEKLY,**  
79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

**TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.**

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 480, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line boys and girls and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

**William Alkire, 295 Laurel St., Bridgeton, N. J.**

**Z. T. Layfield, Jr., Montgomery, Ala.**

**J. G. Byrum, Chattanooga, Tenn.**

**Wm. Schwartz, New York City.**

**Edw. W. Pritner, Curesville, Pa.**

**H. D. Morgan, Indianapolis, Ind.**

**Wm. A. Cottrell, Honolulu, H. I.**

**J. (Pop) H., Birmingham, Ala.**

**Roy R. Ball, 902 Olive Street, Texarkana.**

**Fred F. Blake, 1512 E. 10 St., Kansas City, Mo.**

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

**APPLAUSE.**

Owing to the number of letters received, the editors of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

Rah! Rah! Rah! and a tiger for Tip Top, as the boys would say; but as I am a girl, I will just say three cheers for dear old Tip Top. I have been reading the "king of weeklies" for some time, and my favorites are Dick and Frank and all of their friends. I would like to exchange souvenir postal cards with any of the boys who read Tip Top; also I would like to correspond with any of the boys that would let me know their address through the Applause column. Hoping that this will miss the waste-basket, I will close,  
New Albany, Ind. "SWEET SIXTEEN."

"Sweet Sixteen" must be a lover of football and baseball, she starts off with such a vigorous salutation. She evidently takes as much interest in them as her brothers, if she has any. Can't you picture her, boys, sitting in the front row of the grand

stand, waving the colors of her favorite team and shouting encouragement to those in the arena? Who wouldn't try to win when the eyes of the fair were watching him and rosy lips were cheering him on to victory? We haven't any doubt that "Sweet Sixteen's" "Rah! Rah! Rah!" has helped many of Dick's friends to carry the ball over the line.

Dick's O. K., and so is Brad;  
Oh! but Chet is very bad!  
"Rah! for Dick; same for Brad,"  
Is the cheer from every lad.  
Sung from other lands as well.

There is Frank, a married man;  
Easy, Frank, don't leave the band.  
Madam—Mrs. Frank, I mean—  
Pull him back; he'll come, I ween.  
Let us not forget our Bart;  
Eject him not—bless his heart.  
Three rousing cheers for Burt L.—  
Oh, every one, get up and yell.  
No more from me; so all, farewell!

Braymer, Mo.

G. L. GARRISON.

The praises of Dick are sung in other lands, as you say, and will be for a long time to come.

As I have been a regular reader of Tip Top for some time, I take the liberty of writing a few lines. I think it the best book published. I am very glad to hear that Dick and Brad have returned to Fardale. As to the characters in Tip Top, I like them all, for they are very interesting. If any of the readers will send me souvenir postal cards, I will gladly send them some in return. Hoping I will have the pleasure of seeing this in Tip Top, I remain,  
JAMES VILLENEUVE.

227 Esplanade Avenue, Montreal, Canada.

You have broader tastes than some of our former readers, as you like all the characters, while they care for only a few. But this shows how lifelike the author has made them all.

As I have been a reader of your king of weeklies for about five years, I thought I would write a few lines. I think Dick and Frank are fine. I am almost in love with Dick myself, but please don't tell June about it. I would like to buy or trade old Tip Tops. Well, I must close, with best wishes,  
Stamford, Tex. BLUE EYES.

We will keep your secret and not tell June that you have fallen in love with her Dick.

I have been reading the TIP TOP WEEKLY for seven years, and I have found it to be the most sensible book I have read. Of the characters, I like Dick, Frank, Brad, Bart, Tubbs, Stretcher, and Wiley. I hope that Stretcher and Wiley will meet some time in the future to relate more of their stories, and also hope that Chester Arlington will become Dick's best friend later on.

I will close, with three cheers for Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith. Yours truly,  
Hoboken, N. J. LOUIS PLISCHKE.

Perhaps Stretcher and Wiley will meet again and spring yarns. Stranger things than that have happened. Watch out!

As it has been some time since my last letter, I to-day take the very great pleasure in writing again to the king of weeklies, Tip Top. My Now or Never Boys always call Friday evenings after school to get Tip Top and *All-Sports Library*. I say they, and am backed up by them, that Tip Top takes the cake in being an old standby, and the only one that does not vary in keeping up to the standard in variety of stories, being always full of every kind of sport. My Now or Never Boys think so, at least. My sales have more than doubled over this time last year—1904—and I hope to still increase the sales in Ripley. I know my boys want all the physical culture lessons they can get, so they get Tip Top WEEKLY and *All-Sports Library*, as they supply a great deal of same. Burt L. Standish is more popular than any other writer of fiction being published in the United States to-day. I wish there were more such

men as authors. It would do away with so much trash. So the Now or Never Boys say, and I agree with them, too. I was glad to see that Dick Merriwell had returned to Fardale, and of his restoration to school. So, you see, boys, right will always triumph first, last, and always. Dick and Brad and Prof. Gunn have had a long trip around the world, and I know they have enjoyed it, too. The Now or Never Boys say they only wish it had been them. I hope to see Dick and Chester friends, but we will leave that to the future to reveal. Will close for this time. Long life to Burt L. Standish, Street & Smith, and readers. Your friend,

JOHN R. RAINS, President of Now or Never Boys.  
Ripley, Miss.

Here is a long letter from a reader in the sunny South, telling us what he thinks of the good things to be found in TIP TOP.

I have read the TIP TOP since No. 1, and think it is the best weekly published. I have given my TIP TOP to other boys, who are now reading them every week. Last month I got eight boys to read them every week, and they think it is fine. I will try to get other boys to read it.

I like Brad, Hal, Ted Smart, Earl, and also Tubbs, Bart, and Ready. But Frank and Dick come ahead of them all. Please excuse my writing, for I am only twelve years old. Do not forget the girls, June, Doris, Felicia, and Inza and Elsie. Hip! hip! hurrah! for Street & Smith and Burt L. Standish. I remain, a steady reader of the greatest weekly ever published, the TIP TOP,  
ELMER HOLBECK.

Port Chester, N. Y.

This is a letter from a prodigy. The TIP TOP WEEKLY was first published ten years ago, and our young friend says that he has read it from the first number. As he is twelve years, according to his own statement, he began reading TIP TOP at the mature age of two! We can imagine him toddling around the room with a TIP TOP in his hand, gravely reading from its pages, to the amusement and delight of his happy parents. Can any other reader boast of such an accomplishment at such a tender age? But, after all, you know that the stories in TIP TOP are so enjoyable that it's no wonder that a child of two should become interested in them.

I would like to exchange souvenir post-cards with any of the readers who will send me some from their city. I remain,  
1415 Eleventh Avenue, Seattle, Wash. GENEVIEVE BURNS.

What a variety of subjects you can send from the State of big firs and Siwash Indians! The Snoqualmie Falls, with its plunge of three hundred feet; the totem pole in Pioneer Square, carved from top to bottom with the hideous Indian faces and animal heads and daubed with bright colors; the old Indian princess, who was supposed to have lived over a century before she died; and then the trees, almost as large as the California red-woods, through which a coach-and-four can drive! There is one souvenir we would like to receive from Puget Sound while shivering in New York's winter blast: the balmy Chinook winds that make the air feel like perpetual spring!

I have been a reader of the TIP TOP WEEKLY for a few years, but this is the first time I have ever written. I like the weekly very much, and as regards Frank and Dick, they are ideals. Would be more than pleased to hear from any of the TIP TOP readers. Address,  
HARRY H. CHAPHAM.  
Endicott, N. Y.

A short letter, but to the point. He knows what he wants to say and says it in a few words.

I take off my "lid" to the best weekly ever published. I have been reading TIP TOP for about two years, and intend to keep on reading as long as possible. I haven't any favorites, unless you may call Brad my favorite.

All of the characters are interesting to me. How could TIP TOP get along without Chet Arlington, for if it hadn't been for him, Dick would never have taken a trip around the globe.

He would never have been able to show the Japs how the Americans play ball.

I congratulate Frank and Inza, and hope all their troubles will be "little uns."

A Texas Girl, from San Marcus, attention! Will you be so kind as to give me your most honorable name and address? If, most honorable, you will kindly do so, you will help while away the lonely hours of one "Cowboy."

Hoping that I will see this in print soon, I will close, with a "bumper" to TIP TOP, Street & Smith, and Burt L. Standish.

I am, yours,

A TEXAS COWBOY.

Burnet, Tex.

How does "A Texas Cowboy" expect a young lady to give him her address if he does not show good faith by first sending his name, instead of hiding behind a *nom de plume*? But he probably neglected to sign his right name out of mere thoughtlessness and will send it in later on. Every boy who wishes to do any corresponding should bear in mind that the first sign of good faith in a matter of this kind is to avoid anything that savors of being intentionally anonymous. If you desire others to comply with a request to send their names, remember that as you are doing the asking, they will expect you to be frank, to inspire their confidence. These suggestions are made for the benefit of other readers who may be perfectly sincere, as we believe "A Texas Cowboy" to be, but who do not stop to think that they will be disappointed in starting a correspondence with other TIP TOP readers if they do not observe this one little thing at the very beginning.

I have been reading your TIP TOP WEEKLY for some time, and must say it is the best book I ever read. I think the characters are fine, especially Frank and Dick. Of Dick's friends, Brad is my favorite, because he is so true to Dick.

Of the girls, Doris is the best, although June and Felicia are nice, too. As Dick is dark, I think blue-eyed, sunny-haired Doris would be best suited to him. Anyway, she is so brave, unselfish, and sweet.

Although I am a girl reader, I take a great interest in football and baseball, and love to read about these sports in your weekly. I think it would be fine if you could publish two weeklies, because it takes so long to come out.

I love to write letters, and will correspond with any of the readers.

Hoping to see this in print, I close, with three cheers and success to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith. Yours truly,  
Chicago, Ill. BLUE EYES.

As long as TIP TOP appears only once a week, and you are so anxious to get the next number, why not do the same as a great many readers? They read each copy several times. And with each additional reading they discover something in its pages that before they did not think was there.

Having read your famous TIP TOP, king of weeklies, for over four years, I take the liberty of writing a few lines. I am glad that Chet got just what he deserved, and I hope that Rob Riorden gets his medicine pretty soon. I like Dick best of the boys, and I think June is sweetest of all the girls. I am collecting postal cards, and any one sending me one, I will in return send he or she a souvenir of the beautiful Minnehaha Falls. Wishing Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith good luck, I will close. May TIP TOP forever be in print.  
J. F. FRANCIS.  
J. F. FRANCIS.

3100 Colfax Avenue, S., Minneapolis, Minn.

If you have been a reader of every issue of TIP TOP for the last four years, you know by this time just what noble and chivalrous men the Merriwell boys are. And then June and the other girls are so attractive, there is no wonder that you and thousands of readers are ready to fall in love with them!

As I have been a constant reader of TIP TOP for six or seven years, and have not seen any letters from the mining districts of my State, I take the liberty to write a few lines to the Applause. Although I am not a miner, Holden is a full-fledged coal-mining town. When I came to Holden the nearest news-

store was at the county seat five miles away, so I decided to subscribe for Tip Top. I get my Tip Top every Saturday, read it Saturday night, and lend it out among the miners. I have done so for the past year, so that now the news-dealer at the county seat sells more Tip Tops to the citizens of my town than he does to the citizens of his own. Some of the readers may know that a mining town is very dull on the Sabbath, and nearly everybody reads more or less, and since I introduced Tip Top, a goodly number of the population read it. I have just finished reading No. 495, "Dick Merriwell's Restoration; or, Whipping the Team into Shape," and am anxiously awaiting the time when Horace Logan may pay off the debt he owes that "tough" Rob Rioden.

I should certainly like to hear from Frank and Inza again.

If any of the readers care to correspond, I am willing to, particularly with the fair sex; will also exchange postals. Well, I fear I am taking up too much of your valuable space, so, wishing Mr. Standish long life and all the success he deserves, I remain, a friend from a camp of fuel diggers,

Box 2, Holden, W. Va.

C. E. COBERLY.

This is the true Tip Top spirit, and we congratulate our West Virginian friend on his display of that spirit. A dyed-in-the-wool Tip Topper like him never intends to allow any obstacle to stand in his way, especially when he wants to get his favorite weekly. We shall be pleased to put your name on the Roll of Honor.

I have just finished reading Tip Top No. 495, which makes three hundred I have read. I have read every one from 195 to date, and I think they are fine. Of Frank's crowd, I like Hodge, Ready, and Rattleton best. I am glad Frank married, and I think he got the best girl he could have got.

About a year ago my dealer came to me and said he was going to stop the Tip Top, because he only could sell one, and that was mine. Well, this I didn't want to see, so I went out that same evening and told the boys about Tip Top WEEKLY. They all liked it, and next week he ordered twelve copies. As Brad would say, that was "whooping her up." As I see your Roll of Honor, I think I ought to be included among the boys that helped the Tip Top along. Would like very much to correspond with any of our fourteen-year-old readers. As this is my first letter, I hope it will not find its way to the dreaded waste-basket. I remain, a true Tip Topper,

Womelsdorf, Pa.

THOMAS SILIONOUR.

This is good work and deserves considerable praise. Although we prefer to be the judges in all matters pertaining to the Roll of Honor, and seldom inscribe a boy's name there upon his own request, an exception will be made in your case.

Having read almost all of the TIP TOP WEEKLIES, I think I ought to have the use of the Applause as well as some of the other readers. The Tip Top has fine stories since Dick appeared at Fardale the last time, but it was always good reading. The only fault I have is Felicia does not appear enough times to suit me. Of the characters, I like Dick's flock best, especially Gardner and Darrell. Also June, of the girls, and hope Dick chooses her for his better half. And of Frank's set, I like Ready and Browning best. I am sorry Frank did not take Elsie instead of Inza. I have several Tip Tops I will sell or exchange for Tip Tops. I will write down my list of Tip Tops, which I will either sell or exchange: 250, 257, 261, 259, 248, 245, 258, 251, 252, 260, 271, 272, 273, 266, 298, 288, 275, 315, 314, 325, 337, 419, 441, 414, 474, 460, 462. Also I will buy Tip Tops, for I have not quite a complete set; so send your list. I will close, with three cheers for Tip Top WEEKLY and Burt L. Yours truly,

FRED ZIEG.

R. R. No. 7, Marion, Ohio.

No doubt readers who are completing files, like yourself, and have extra copies of some of the issues, will be pleased to make exchanges with you.

Dear old Tip Top! I am an enthusiastic reader of Tip Top, and although I am a girl, I never read anything that I liked better. I am very fond of baseball. Haven't missed a game at our park this summer. I am also at all the games played by

Dick, and root as loud as Brad when Dick does his wonderful playing. I am there from the time Dick toes the slab until the game is ended. I sure enjoyed the game with the Japs and almost yelled myself hoarse. Brad is a "peach," and it is hard to tell who I like most, he or Dick. I like the unbranded sons of the West. Sometimes I wish Dick would let Brad alone, and let him "punch" up some of the sneaks who bother him and Dick. But doesn't he make you laugh sometimes. Gee! but didn't he and Dick have fun with the hornets! Wish I had been there. Oh! I laughed until I cried. The old professors looked so funny passing the bottle. Brother says I'm a Tip Top crank. Pretty good kind of crank to be, don't you think? There are four of us "kids," three brothers and myself, and we all read Tip Top, passing it on to our neighbor; then we all discuss it. Well, Chet got his dues, after all. Brad looked awfully disappointed that Dick didn't punch him when he had a chance. To tell the truth, so was I. I was in the very midst of those boys when they were welcoming Dick back to Fardale. Rioden is a "chump," and ought to be put out of school. He has no place at Fardale. Chip is all right, and the way he chews his words up—oh, goodness! Ted, Billy, Bob, and Earl are all right. I am glad Obediah got to go to the picnic and eat pie. Tell him I like lemon pies as well as he does. Ask Rioden how "Zona is" for me. If anybody wants to correspond with a jolly Tip Top admirer from Dixie, I am ready to answer all letters. I am between sixteen and twenty.

Natchitoches, La.

A GIRL FROM DIXIE.

We are only too pleased to be able to carry your messages to your favorite characters. Rest assured that the very next time we shall see them that we will not fail to comply with your request. So you were at the games and rooted for Dick? We remember now that Dick said he saw you in the grand stand. If you promise not to repeat what we say, here is a secret. Dick said, only the other day—in confidence, of course—that he feels sure that your presence at the game inspired him with the necessary courage to do the wonderful things that won the game.

Now what do you think? I have been reading your king of weeklies, Tip Top, for over nine years, and this is the first time that I write to let you know what I think of it. Don't you think I have been rather stingy? But as it is never too late, I will now say a few words. Tip Top is true to its name, and if there is another weekly that is better, I wish some one would show it to me. I like Dick and his friends very much, but Frank is my idol. And as long as Tip Top is published it will find a warm friend in me, and I shall never give it up. Will answer all correspondence. As I will not see this in print for two months, I wish Burt L. Standish, Street & Smith, and all the Tip Top readers a merry Christmas and a happy New-year.

As for me, I still remain a true Tip Topper,

182 Magill Street, Pawtucket, R. I.

WM. BORDEAUX.

No one can show you a better weekly than Tip Top, no matter how hard he tries. It would have to be something extraordinary if it succeeded in taking away from Tip Top a faithful reader like yourself. But the way in which our friends write from all over the country, and sound their praises of those manly young Americans, indicates that the Tip Top army is growing each week.

The last time I wrote to the Applause column I was a Canadian soldier. I am now one of Uncle Sam's regulars in the Philippines, and would like to say that I have traveled 'way round the globe. Here's hoping Dick will overcome all enemies, and that in the days to come he may marry June, the girl he loves, and that he may, like Frank, soon go to Yale and continue his fine athletic record there, and that Brad may meet with Truthful; also that Ted S. may be on the spot, and then Truthful will surely cash in his checks.

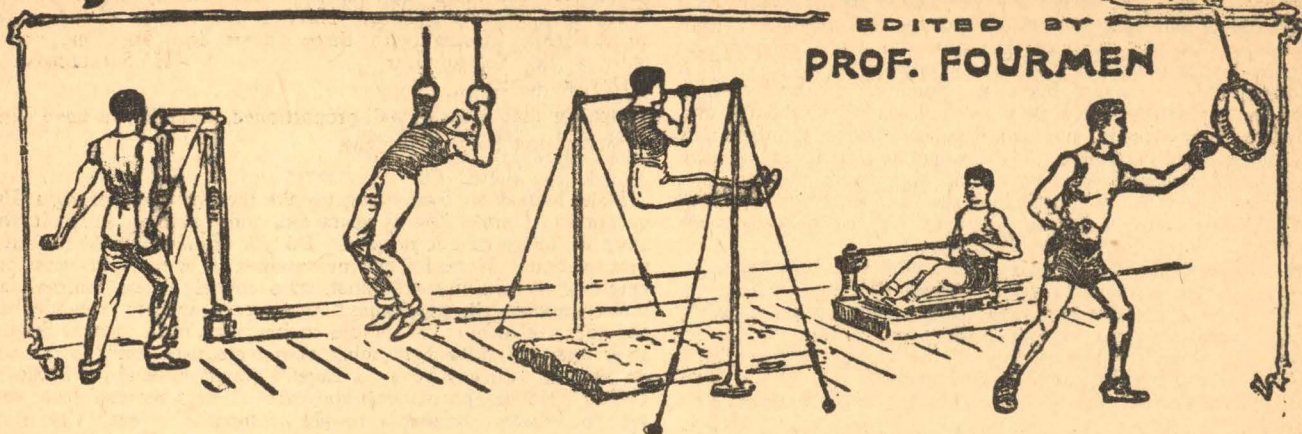
WALTER F. HYDE.

Calamba, Laguna, P. I.

You have traveled many thousands of miles since your first letter was sent to us. The Philippines are a great way off to most of our readers, and a letter like yours must seem like coming from the ends of the earth.

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EDITED BY  
**PROF. FOURMEN**



**PROF. FOURMEN:** As I am an ardent reader of *TIP TOP WEEKLY*, I take the liberty of sending my measurements, which are as follows: Age, 18 years; weight, 125 pounds; height, 5 feet 6 inches; neck, 14 inches; right bicep,  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches; left, 10 inches; thigh, 19 inches; calves, right,  $13\frac{1}{4}$  inches; left, 11.5 inches; waist, 32 inches; ankle, right,  $8\frac{3}{4}$  inches; left,  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches; wrist, 7 inches; across shoulders, 16 inches; chest, normal, 31.5 inches; expanded,  $34\frac{3}{4}$  inches. How are those in proportion to my height and age? What are my weak points? How can I remedy them? As you have seen, my left leg is much smaller and weaker than the right. How can I remedy it? Please send proper exercises to increase in weight and make stronger and harder muscles. Thanking you now, I remain,  
 Kelley's Island, Ohio.

JOHN F. MCGURN.

You are under weight. Exercise to take on about ten pounds. You should use pulley weights to develop your chest and biceps. Nearly every one is larger on one side.

**PROF. FOURMEN:** As I am a constant reader of *TIP TOP*, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. I am 17 years 3 months old, weigh 138 pounds and am 5 feet 8 inches tall. Chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded,  $37\frac{1}{2}$  inches; waist, 29 inches; thighs, 21 inches; calves,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches; neck,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches; forearm,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches; biceps, 14 inches; across shoulders,  $18\frac{1}{4}$  inches. I have been pitcher on a baseball team for two years. I take great interest in running. How am I formed for running? How are my measurements? I use Indian clubs, dumb-bells and punch the bag. Are these sufficient to keep a person in ordinary training? I have very good wind. I do not chew or smoke tobacco, or drink any liquor. Is this the reason for my having good wind? Hoping to see this, with answers, in print, I am,  
 Batesville, Ind.

A MERRIWELL FOLLOWER.

You could take on a little more weight to your advantage, but your measurements are good, nevertheless. If your use of the dumb-bells, Indian clubs and punching bag is regular, the exercise you get is enough to keep you in very good condition. Your general physical condition has a great deal to do with your wind, and the excellence of the former depends greatly on your total abstinence from liquor and tobacco. Being in the "pink of condition," naturally your lungs are not affected, thus giving you good wind. As one's wind can never be too good, I advise that you take deep-breathing exercises and cross-country runs.

**PROF. FOURMEN:** I hope you will answer all the questions I herein ask, because I consider them very important. 1. I am going to train for cross-country running. Will you kindly outline a course of training for me? 2. Kindly give me a good deep-breathing exercise. 3. What weight dumb-bells should a boy sixteen years old use? 4. Where can I buy a good book on physical training? 5. Which is it best to be, an all-round athlete or a specialist in one thing? 6. What is a good exercise for a moderately weak heart? 7. Kindly name some points outside of New York which I can run to? 8. What is a good exercise for filling out a hollow-looking stomach? 9. I would like to join some club which encourages cross-country running.

If such a club reads this, and they wish to increase their membership, would they kindly let me know through these columns? I would be delighted to join them. Hoping you will forgive me for asking so many questions, I remain, yours very truly,  
 New York City.

ALBERT G. FADER.

To develop into a cross-country runner you must first see that your general physical condition is good. A course of all-around gymnastics will prepare you in the hardening process necessary for one to have. Begin by taking runs of short distances, increasing them gradually. When you have got so that you can do a mile without too much fatigue it will be time enough to start on cross-country work. In the training leading up to this be careful not to keep at your running from day to day so that it is necessary to draw upon your reserve energy. Another thing, do not lift the legs too high in running. You lose time and muscular force, and no runner can afford to squander these, his stock in trade. Cultivate an easy, loose gait. The muscles should not be held at a tension. You get a freer action. Remember that cross-country running is not like track-running. In the latter case you have a smooth, even surface, which makes it easy going; but in the former instance, the runner has to be careful of stones and other obstacles, and the unevenness of the ground. When the muscles are lax they act as a kind of spring, so that when the foot unexpectedly strikes the inequalities of the course the body does not meet with any unnecessary resistance. The constant jarring that would affect the muscles held at a tension would be very wearing and soon tire out the runner, no matter how well-trained he might be. Of course, at the end of the course one will naturally tighten them up and sprint over the last stretch with every fiber under a tremendous strain. But avoid this in your training. Let the gait be steady and mechanical, so that you can be free to slacken your pace while going up a hill, or lengthen it while coming down to a level.

2. Stand at "attention"; bend over slightly, at the same time contracting the chest and allowing the shoulders to fall toward each other. Draw the body up slowly, taking as full a breath as possible, and throwing the shoulders well back as you come to an erect position. Hold the air in the lungs for a few seconds, and then force it out gradually through the nose. Do this about fifteen times.

3. Two-pound dumb-bells are heavy enough for you to use.

4. We will mail you "Frank Merriwell's Book of Athletic Development" for fourteen cents. This includes postage. Also my "Physical Health Culture" will give you many valuable hints on general training.

5. Personally, I am of the opinion that to be a perfectly developed, all-around athlete is much more satisfactory than a specialist trained only to one thing.

6. A course of training without apparatus, such as those

founded on the United States army exercises. We will mail you Prof. Donovan's revised edition for fourteen cents in stamps.

7. There are so many places in and about the city limits that I could not begin to name them. As you are a New Yorker, judging from your letter, you ought to be able to pick out any number. In doing so, remember that your cross-country distance should not exceed six or seven miles.

8. I should say that plenty of good, wholesome food three times a day would be about the best remedy for a "hollow-looking stomach." It has been effectual in a great number of cases.

9. If there are any boys' cross-country running clubs in your neighborhood they will probably see this and send in their address.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of TIP TOP, I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. My measurements are: Age, 18 years 2 months; height, 5 feet 8 inches; chest, 38 inches; waist, 31 inches; hips, 35 inches; thighs, 20 inches; calf, 14 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. Do you think I could become an all-around athlete? ERNEST KNOLL, JR.  
Gretna, Neb.

As you have neglected to give all the essential measurements, it is quite impossible to comply with your request.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read TIP TOP WEEKLY for two years, and think it is fine. Below I send in my measurements, which I hope will be considered: Age, 16 years 8 months; height, 5 feet 5 inches; weight, 116 pounds in street attire; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 34 inches; waist, 26 inches; hips, 33 inches; thighs, 19½ inches; calves, 13¼ inches; ankles, 9 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. Which are my weak points? 3. Which are my strong points? 4. Am I built for a half-miler? I have been training for the half mile since October 9 and intend to keep it up till next April. I can do the half mile in two-eighths. 5. Is that good? 6. Do you think I can get it down to two-ten or two-twelve by April? With three cheers for Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith, I will close. Yours truly,  
"A WILL-BE HALF-MILER."

You have not the proportions you should have for your height, but, on the other hand, are built for a runner, not having any superfluous flesh. You ought to become a good runner, with proper training. I see no reason why you shouldn't still lower your present record if you continue to improve in training. Your record is very good.

PROF. FOURMEN: My measurements are the following: Age, 17 years 2 months; height, 5 feet 10 inches; weight, 140 pounds; neck, 14½ inches; chest, normal, 34½ inches; expanded, 36½ inches; forearm, 11 inches; biceps, 11½ inches; waist, 28¼ inches; hips, 35 inches; thighs, 20¾ inches; calves, 14¾ inches. 1. How are these measurements? 2. What are my weak points? I remain, a true Tip Topper,  
D. W. M. H.  
Norwalk, Conn.

For a person of your build you should weigh about fifteen pounds more. Your chest development and biceps are considerably below normal. These are two important considerations you should look after. Punch the bag twice a day, take early morning cross-country runs for your wind, and use either a pulley machine or dumb-bells for the biceps. If you smoke, give it up absolutely, for this pernicious habit will counteract the effects of your training. I speak of this because smoking is so prevalent among the young men of this generation, and has wrecked so many promising careers. In my many years as an athletic instructor, I found that weak lungs and a deficiency in chest measurement among young men invariably resulted from overindulgence in smoking.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read TIP TOP for five years, and take the liberty to send my measurements. Age, 16 years 2 months; weight, 131 pounds; chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded, 36¾ inches; waist, 28 inches; calf, 14 inches; forearm, 11¼ inches;

biceps, 13¼ inches; neck, 13 inches; thigh, 18¼ inches; hips, 32 inches; shoulders, 19 inches. What are my weak points? What are my strong ones? Have I any chance of becoming an athlete? Closing with three cheers for TIP TOP, yours truly, a TIP TOP admirer,  
Dayton, Ohio. H. SHALLCROSS.

I judge that you are well-proportioned, though you have neglected to give me your height.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am going to take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am a boy 15 years old, and I want to enlist in the navy as an apprentice seaman. Do you think I would pass the examination? Here are my measurements: Weight, 111 pounds; height, 5 feet 4 inches; waist, 27½ inches; chest, normal, 29 inches; expanded, 31 inches; neck, 12½ inches; shoulder to shoulder, 15 inches; wrists, 6½ inches; calf, 11½ inches; thighs, 18 inches. What do you think of my measurements? I do not go around with any boys. I haven't played baseball or football, or any outdoor sports, for two years. I kept moving from one city to another, staying a couple of months in each city, so I haven't got acquainted with any of the boys. Please tell me a good way to make myself strong and my shoulders broad. Please tell me if you think I would pass the examination to get in the navy. Thanking you in advance, I remain,  
Hartford, Conn. A CONSTANT READER.

You should write to the secretary of war, Washington, D. C., for all information pertaining to enlistments. You should use chest weights, dumb-bells, and Indian clubs to enlarge your shoulders.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been reading TIP TOP WEEKLY for the past two years, and must say it is the king of weeklies. I also take a great interest in your columns. I am very anxious to become strong, and would be very much obliged to you if you would answer the following questions. Every morning I take dumb-bell exercises, as given in "Frank Merriwell's Book of Athletic Development," Chapter XI., Muscle Building. I take about half-an-hour's exercise, followed by a cold sponge bath and a good rub-down. 1. Do you think these exercises will give me good all-round development? 2. When is the best time to punch the bag? 3. What is good for bad wind? Kindly answer these questions, as I am desirous to know if I am starting out right. Yours respectfully,  
Toronto, Canada. E. J. B.

1. Yes; if you follow the instructions faithfully for a sufficient length of time. If you can join a well-equipped gymnasium, do so. There you will have personal instruction. This is always best, as your development can be watched from week to week by the physical director, and he can suggest various changes from time to time. Then again, in a gymnasium there are so many different apparatus for the development of the same set of muscles that you have an opportunity to vary your exercises. This prevents a course of training from growing monotonous, as it will if one continues at one, and only one, thing for an indefinite period. For instance, if a person uses both dumb-bells and Indian clubs to enlarge his biceps, the change from one to the other keeps up the interest much more than when the clubs are used to the exclusion of the dumb-bells, or vice versa. "Variety is the spice of life that gives it all its flavor" just as much in physical training as in other things.

2. Punch the bag when you feel like it, though it is better to have a stated time set apart in the morning and evening and adhere to the schedule day after day. Say ten minutes before breakfast and ten at bedtime.

3. Take deep-breathing exercises.

## "GOLDEN HOURS."

Boys, have you any old numbers of Golden Hours? If so, see what numbers are among them and write me, stating price. I will pay liberally to complete my files. Address WILLIAMS, Station "O," Box 24, New York City.

# TIP TOP WEEKLY

**CAUTION!**

All readers of the Renowned Tip Top stories should beware of base imitations, placed upon the market under catch names very similar to Frank Merriwell, and intended to deceive.

- 472—Frank Merriwell's Handicap; or, Hastings, The Hurdler from Humboldt.
- 473—Frank Merriwell's Red Challengers; or, The Hot Game with the Nebraska Indians.
- 474—Frank Merriwell's Fencing; or, For Sport or For Blood.
- 475—Frank Merriwell's Backer; or, Playing Baseball for a Fortune.
- 476—Frank Merriwell's Endurance; or, The Cross-Country Champions of America.
- 477—Frank Merriwell in Form; or, Wolfers, the Wonder from Wisconsin.
- 478—Frank Merriwell's Method; or, The Secret of Becoming a Champion.
- 479—Frank Merriwell's Level Best; or, Cutting the Corners with a New Curve.
- 480—Frank Merriwell's Lacrosse Team; or, The Great Hustle with Johns Hopkins.
- 481—Frank Merriwell's Great Day; or, The Crowning Triumph of His Career.
- 482—Dick Merriwell in Japan; or, Judo Art Against Jiu-Jitsu.
- 483—Dick Merriwell on the Rubber; or, Playing Baseball in the Flowery Kingdom.
- 484—Dick Merriwell's Cleverness; or, Showing the Japs the American Game.
- 485—Dick Merriwell in Manila; or, Papinta, the Pride of the Philippines.
- 486—Dick Merriwell Marooned; or, The Queen of Fire Island.
- 487—Dick Merriwell's Comrade; or, The Treasure of the Island.
- 488—Dick Merriwell, Gap-Stopper; or, A Surprise for the Surprisers.
- 489—Dick Merriwell's Sacrifice Hit; or, Winning by a Hair's Breadth.
- 490—Dick Merriwell's Support; or, Backed Up When Getting His Bumps.
- 491—Dick Merriwell's Stroke; or, Swimming for His Life.
- 492—Dick Merriwell Shadowed; or, The Search for the Lost Professor.
- 493—Dick Merriwell's Drive; or, Evening Up with His Enemy.
- 494—Dick Merriwell's Return; or, The Reappearance at Fardale.
- 495—Dick Merriwell's Restoration; or, Whipping the Team into Shape.
- 496—Dick Merriwell's Value; or, The Success of Square Sport.
- 497—Dick Merriwell's "Dukes"; or, His Fight with Himself.
- 498—Dick Merriwell's Drop-Kick; or, Chester Arlington's Team of Tigers.
- 499—Dick Merriwell's Defeat; or, How Arlington Won the Second Game.
- 500—Dick Merriwell's Chance; or, Taming the Tigers of Fairport.
- 501—Dick Merriwell's Stride; or, The Finish of the Cross Country Run.
- 502—Dick Merriwell's Wing-Shift; or, The Great Thanksgiving Day Game.
- 503—Dick Merriwell's Skates; or, Playing Ice Hockey for Every Point.
- 504—Dick Merriwell's Four Fists; or, The Champion of the Chanson.
- 505—Dick Merriwell's Dashing Game; or, The Fast Five from Fairport.
- 506—Frank Merriwell's Tigers; or, Wiping Out the Railroad Wolves.
- 507—Frank Merriwell's Treasure Guard; or, The Defenders of the Pay Train.
- 508—Frank Merriwell's Flying Fear; or, The Ghost of the Yaqui.
- 509—Dick Merriwell in Maine; or, Sport and Peril in the Winter Woods.
- 510—Dick Merriwell's Polo Team; or, The Rattlers of the Roller Rink.
- 511—Dick Merriwell in the Ring; or, The Champion of His Class.
- 512—Frank Merriwell's New Idea; or, The American School of Athletic Development.
- 513—Frank Merriwell's Troubles; or, Enemies in the Fold.

Back numbers may be had from all newsdealers or will be sent, postpaid, by the publishers upon receipt of price

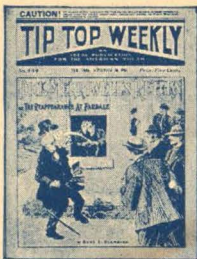
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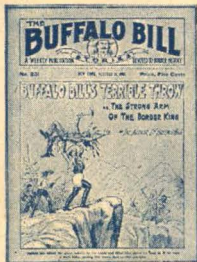
# THE FAVORITE LIST OF FIVE-CENT LIBRARIES



## TIP TOP WEEKLY

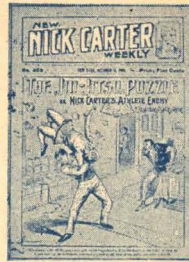
Frank and Dick Merriwell are two brothers whose adventures in college and on the athletic field are of intense interest to the American boy of to-day. They prove that a boy does not have to be a rowdy to have exciting sport.

### Buffalo Bill Stories



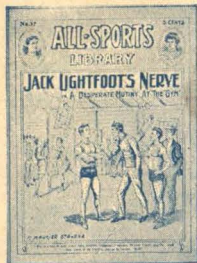
Buffalo Bill is the hero of a thousand exciting adventures among the Redskins. These are given to our boys only in the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are bound to interest and please you.

### Nick Carter Weekly



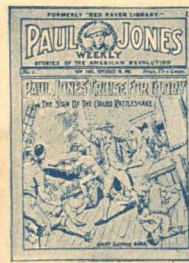
We know, boys, that there is no need of introducing to you Nicholas Carter, the greatest sleuth that ever lived. Every number containing the adventures of Nick Carter has a peculiar, but delightful, power of fascination.

### All-Sports Library



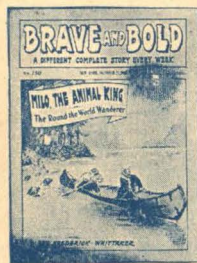
All sports that boys are interested in, are carefully dealt with in the All-Sports Library. The stories deal with the adventures of plucky lads while indulging in healthy pastimes.

### Paul Jones Weekly



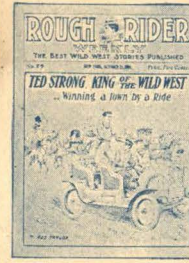
Do not think for a second, boys, that these stories are a lot of musty history, just sugar-coated. They are all new tales of exciting adventure on land and sea, in all of which boys of your own age took part.

### Brave and Bold



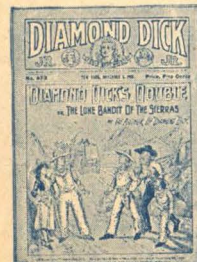
Every boy who prefers variety in his reading matter, ought to be a reader of Brave and Bold. All these were written by authors who are past masters in the art of telling boys' stories. Every tale is complete in itself.

### Rough Rider Weekly



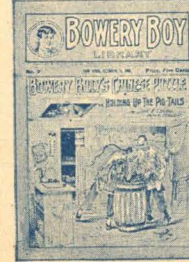
Ted Strong was appointed deputy marshal by accident, but he resolves to use his authority and rid his ranch of some very tough bullies. He does it in such a slick way that everyone calls him "King of the Wild West" and he certainly deserves his title.

### Diamond Dick Weekly



The demand for stirring stories of Western adventure is admirably filled by this library. Every up-to-date boy ought to read just how law and order are established and maintained on our Western plains by Diamond Dick, Bertie, and Handsome Harry.

### Bowery Boy Library



The adventures of a poor waif whose only name is "Bowery Billy." Billy is the true product of the streets of New York. No boy can read the tales of his trials without imbibing some of that resource and courage that makes the character of this homeless boy stand out so prominently.

woody